

Childhood Education

The Magazine for Teachers of Young Children

To Stimulate Thinking Rather Than Advocate Fixed Practice

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CONTENTS FOR JANUARY, 1941

	Page
EDITORIALS—CREATIVE HANDS WILL MAKE A BETTER WORLD	199
"FANTASIA" AND THE CHILDREN	200
THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIALLY USEFUL WORK IN CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	201
LET US BE GAY	205
CREATIVE EXPERIENCES IN MUSIC AND THE DANCE	210
ART-Q	214
CREATIVE ADVENTURES IN THE NURSERY SCHOOL	221
TIME TO GROW IN A CHILD ENVIRONMENT	227
ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK	230
BOOK REVIEWS	233
BOOKS FOR CHILDREN	235
AMONG THE MAGAZINES	236
RESEARCH ABSTRACTS	237
NEWS HERE AND THERE	239

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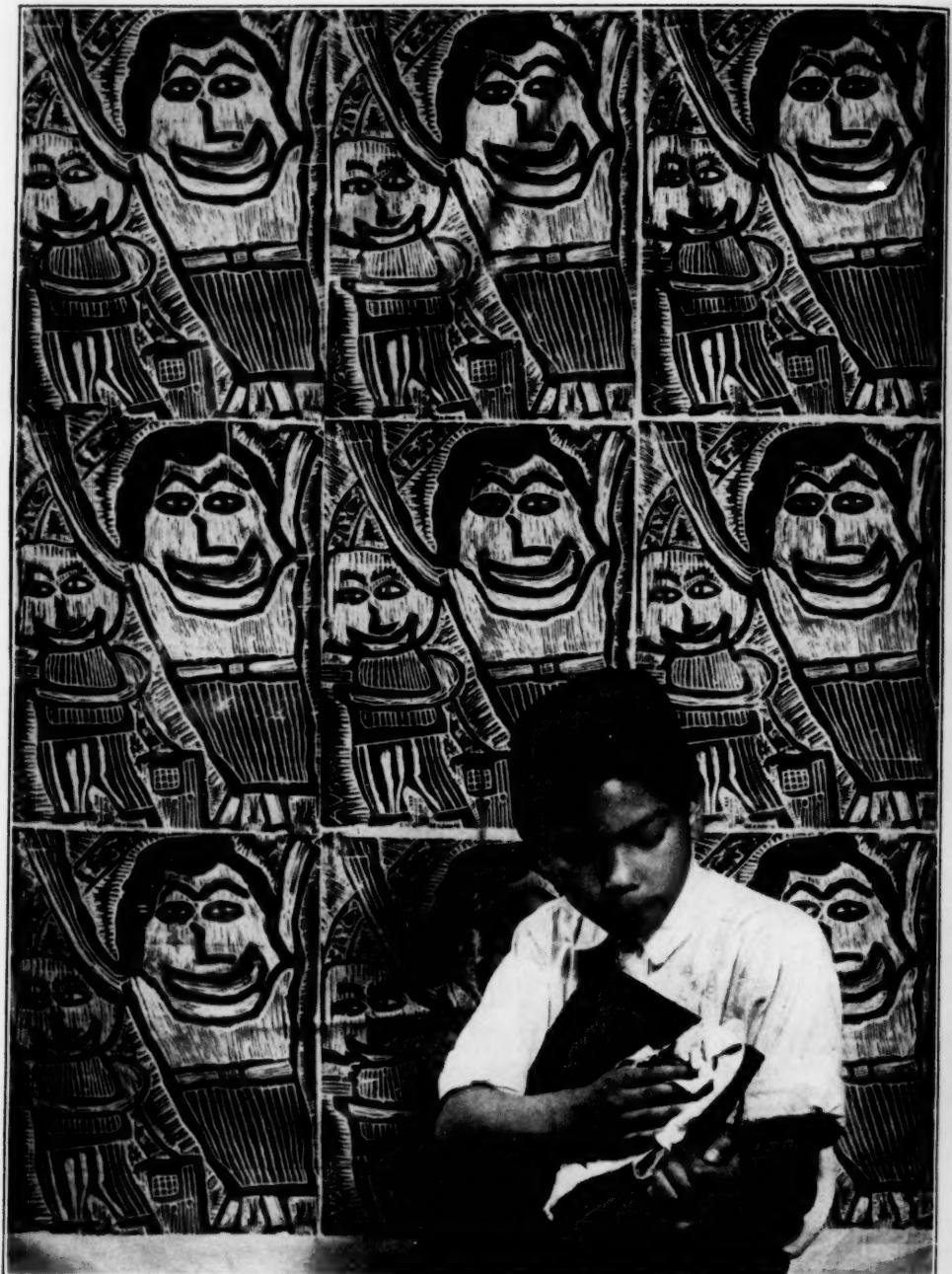
Next Month—

■ "Learning to Speak and Write Effectively" is the theme for the February issue. Paul Witty of Northwestern University has prepared an article on this theme and includes some interesting new materials which have grown out of recent observations and experiments.

Virginia Sanderson of Ohio State University has described some of the ways in which the teacher can diagnose difficulties and help the speech of children. June Ferebee and Doris Jackson of Bronxville, New York, public schools, two of the authors of *They All Want to Write*, have prepared a manuscript on helping children learn to write, describing some follow-up ideas suggested in their book.

"The Voice of the Teacher" is the title of Elsie Mae Gordon's article, prepared from her experiences with the National Broadcasting Company in helping many people learn to use their voices well. Louise Abney, Teachers College, Kansas City, Missouri, analyzes speech and its effectiveness in terms of child growth.

EXTRA COPIES—Orders for extra copies of this issue must be received by the Association for Childhood Education by the tenth of the month of issue.



From "The Arts in the Classroom" by N. Cole. (John Day Company)

*Patterns thrown out to fill space
with rhythm and distinction
Textiles catching the child's own feeling.*

Creative Hands Will Make A Better World

FOR MANY YEARS a false ideal has persisted that culture or gentleness consisted largely of not working with one's hands. Men with calloused hands were something uncouth and the greatest desire of many a mother was to see her son capably placed in a "white collar" job where he could accumulate wealth with a brain that would work only at a desk. This belief has brought its penalties upon each nation who made it an ideal, in lowered standards of health, lesser art achievements, and social difficulties. Many leaders of our nation today are urging a greater return to the use of our hands through many avenues of creative work.

The seeming trend of the human mind, evident even in the young child, is that of destroying or breaking constructed objects. The tendency to destroy will not grow into an adult trait if the child learns to use his hands in constructive art. He will too greatly respect all that goes into handicraft ever to approve the urge for destroying any part of the art crafts of his fellow men.

The world is witnessing today the supposedly greatest nations in cultural development bending all their manhood and materials into building greater and better engines for mass destruction of all that other men have built. Now as never before we should use all our energies toward developing more creative minds for building a new world for tomorrow's men, that they may have more creative minds and hands for making the beautiful rather than the destructive. This great art appreciation can only be established through the actual doing, the actual handwork, rather than through mere book learning that has impeded for years our art growth.

Boris Blai, sculptor and educator and director of fine arts at Temple University, said this in *American Magazine*:

During twelve years of teaching young people in arts, I have not found one student who didn't possess a latent creative instinct that yearned for expression. I am convinced that every human being possesses a creative urge to make beautiful things, that this urge can be brought out and put to work with proper encouragement, and that suppression of it results in maladjustment of life. Furthermore, it is actually dangerous *not* to use your hands. Tests by neurologists . . . show that mental ability increases as the ability to use the hands increases. Manual work demands clear thinking, the working out of your own solutions to problems.

WITHOUT DOUBT there is too great a number of idle youth in our country because the training of more "creative hands" has been neglected. As teachers of young children it is your responsibility to help these creative hands find their medium and then to guide them in making the fullest use of the power that lies within. For of such will a better world be made.—*Pedro J. Lemos, editor, School Arts.*

"Fantasia" and the Children

FANTASIA," the Disney-Stokowski moving picture of music is now issued in book form for children. *Fantasia* takes the music of Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and other great ones and "animates" it with creatures, Hollywood-made in its own image. Mr. Disney writes in his introduction to the book: "The next time you hear the music from which these stories take their title, maybe you'll think of Mlle. Upanova and little Hop Low and Pegasus and Mickey and all the rest . . . just as we do." Then the guileless reader opens the book and the catastrophe is upon him.

We owe Dorothy Thompson a debt of gratitude for her withering two columns in *The New York Tribune* of November 25. Read it all; meanwhile, here is an excerpt:

. . . our eyes are torn open to gaze horrified upon the mockery-Olympus of Disney's dream world in which cherubs expose cute bottoms to our view, cute Hollywood centaurs and even cuter Hollywood centalettes gambol sexfully amongst themselves, he and she Pegasuses display their cute domestic life, obviously all dressed up for the photographer . . .

To which we must add, terrifying monsters debase the "Rites of Spring," and the lovely "Dance of the Hours" is made obscene with gross ostrich and hippopotami ballet dancers who leer through their eyelashes, glued on in the best Hollywood style. These, children are asked to "think of" when they hear the glorious music! A debased art, trying to pull itself up by pulling greatness down!

With *Snow White*, *The Ugly Duckling* and *Pinocchio* these Walt Disney variants of great stories have been appearing in book form to bring confusion to the children and acute discomfort to the un-Hollywood minded who still respect sources and like their literature without benefit of cosmetics. It seems time to protest. These picture books are beautiful in format but the texts are an affront to the sincerity and the imagination of the child's mind. In these books little girls become vapid adolescent blondes whom gentlemen prefer, a great symbolic story is reduced to mere bones, and the adored puppet is outshone by minor characters introduced to supply the "pep" lacking in the reduced narrative. Now comes *Fantasia*, with the ancient gods turned bestial or cruel, and Olympus reduced to the super-colossal caperings of a Hollywood party.

WHERE, oh where, is the Walt Disney who created "Mickey Mouse" with his forthright antics, and "The Three Little Pigs" earnestly struggling to ward off the big, bad wolf and win security? And where is the taste and conscience of a fine publishing house that offers *Fantasia* as a picture book for children?

It is a comfort to turn from this affront to good taste and intelligence and consider gratefully the sturdy picture books and picture stories offered for our children today.—*May Hill Arbuthnot, associate professor of education, Western Reserve University and editor of "Books for Children" for CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.*

The Importance of Socially Useful Work In Childhood Education

Mr. Mitchell, State Teachers College, Florence, Alabama, believes that those who teach young children must press to the background of their consciousness much that is today's reality while they help children create for themselves a more wholesome world than we have known. But these teachers of young children must know what the realities are, must know wherein education has failed to meet them, and must set about to find better ways in which to help children learn to solve their own problems as they meet them, and share ever more broadly in socially useful enterprises.

YESTERDAY I passed a three-year-old who was saying to his mother, "Mother, I want to go to war. I want to kill Hitler."

Look at the world as objectively as one may. The heart-wrenching pity of it all.

In deepest sorrow I remember the bitterness, the exaggeration of atrocities that preceded the first World War. How false a concept of war schools and other forces had built in all of us. I know war: unnatural herding together of men for training more than for education, cantonments surrounded with excited overrun towns each with its quota of prostitutes; costly training, exciting oceanic travel for millions who saw no real war; at the front indescribable danger; for some, sudden or lingering death. That war which accomplished no good, cost ten million lives and nearly four hundred billion dollars, an unthinkable catastrophe.

Since that war I have lived for a little while, at least, in almost every nation of Europe. I found native kindness equally conspicuous among all peoples. Twenty years ago I saw some of the babies in Germany and Italy that now are fighters, feared and hated in so many lands. How inevitable it seems now, yet how unnecessary, that they should have grown into the rôle they play; how inevitable that infants here, so unaware of all fears and hates, should have grown into eager advocates of defense made apparently necessary by the socially inherited enmities. A second world war is costing England alone thirty-seven million dollars a day. This pestilence, war, is blasting whole communities. Our high school texts before the first World War devoted about twenty-two percent of space to military history. Was this space used mainly to build up nationalistic spirit or was it an unprejudiced study of the institution of war? Still more, what of the teaching of other nations?

I was yesterday in the home of a woman with six children. Earth was the floor. Windows there were none. Walls and roof were scraps gathered from the city dump. In size it was about eight by nine or ten feet. It leaned. It was dishevelled inside and out. Such conditions are to be found in many places the country over. The pity of such poverty.

From the adjoining shack a boy was sent to the reform school. Shipped back in a box for burial, the undertakers protested that he had been beaten to death. Last year, in one state of moderate population,

7,600 of its people were suffering incarceration. I watched worn, worried women standing with babies in their arms, calling up in public to fathers and husbands behind the bars. Think of the cost, in dollars and human self-respect, of crime. The institutions out of which grow war and poverty and crime are socially-inherited. Right education could redirect them.

The pity of filth and disease. Rats eat or vitiate each about twenty dollars worth of food a year. We tolerate, year after year, about one rat per capita in our cities and one for each acre of our rural areas. Mice, fleas, roaches, flies, mosquitoes, lice, bedbugs, bacilli blind and cripple and pain and kill millions unnecessarily, year after year. With national will we could stamp out venereal diseases in short order. What an inexcusable pity that these conditions persist.

One may explain all these circumstances with seeming adequacy from one of many viewpoints: the anthropologic, the geographic, the historic, the economic. We are interested in the educational interpretation and remedy.

What Has Education Contributed?

So now let us look at education as objectively as we may. It has been a woefully disintegrated business. Schooling has been too largely divorced from education through out-of-school living. Among teachers there have been generations of intellectual inbreeding; teachers with little experience outside of schools teaching too narrowly from texts much the same subjects they had been taught. There has been retreat from reality. This still goes on. I recently invited each member of a class of seventy-five high school seniors whose work I was momentarily observing, to send me a collect telegram the first time each of them found practical use in life, aside from teaching, of the problem at which they were docilely working: the division of a

line into mean and extreme ratio such that the smaller segment would be to the greater segment as the greater segment is to the whole. Necessary in some fields of study, but ridiculous as a general requirement for graduation.

Education has been disintegrated in other respects, as between the moral and the intellectual. How absurd that we have designated Sunday as a day for teaching moral precepts, monopolizing the other six primarily for intellectual teaching. The pity that every day has not been a day of moral growth, inextricably one with intellectual growth. With belated misgivings in this field, schools began some score of years ago introducing mottoes and trying to rationalize students into presumably moral habits of conduct.

We have divorced physical growth from intellectual growth, scheduling separate hours for each. For the many, athletics have afforded little besides an orgy of excitement over an institutional spirit of somewhat dubious quality. Such rivalry has led even to the drawing up of armed forces opposing one another on the campus of a university. Our intellectual studies have been divided and so far separated from one another and life itself that millions of youth have rebelled against continuing in our schools. The government has been forced to organize new agencies outside of school, as through the NYA and CCC, to provide for more realistic opportunities for growth. And so our system has further become administratively disintegrated.

Not only are we now set in this tradition of disintegrated and disintegrating education, but the economic and consequent political tensions reveal themselves in the disintegration of homes and many aspects of community life. A community lacks unity when some live in palaces with little concern for a multitude of pauper brothers. War and crime and disease are kindred aspects of this want of unity.

Without unity there cannot be community.

The gravity of the entire situation as regards both the social and educational outlook, reveals itself strikingly in the dangers now attendant in speaking or teaching simple truth. The soundness of the teachings of Jesus are constantly questioned, by inference at least, on the street, in our munition factories, and even in the pulpit. We wonder over the practicability of sayings as: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, 'that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.'"

My argument here is neither for nor against defense. I remark only that we have allowed the problems of the world to multiply to such a critical state that it is sincerely questioned even by our moral leaders that the situation can now be met by Christian means. The shocking pity of it all.

What Must We Plan for the Children?

Let us momentarily retreat from this globe. At our new perspective, man has disappeared. The sound of bursting bombs has become inaudible. The high-held banners in varied colors and patterns have dimmed, become indistinguishable. In the serenity of its flight, the world heeds firm laws. The sun gives on and on of its light; clouds form and fall; the seasons follow their round. The oceans maintain their levels; the grounds are refreshed in spring; minerals await use.

Let those of us who are engaged in the education of little children go down to the world thankful that professionally we may brush aside some perplexing questions, thankful that we may engage children in those socially-useful activities through which they may develop roundly.

I do not mean that we must become agitated about poverty and crime and sick-

ness and the other bedfellows of ignorance, and in turn excite children. We owe it to children to shield them from the sound of the shrieking winds that now harass the world. Their tenderness demands this added strength in us. We do need, though, to derive the direction of our thinking from a background of sensitiveness to these world problems. We need to motivate our thought and personal conduct by realistic regard for the pity of all this unnecessary suffering, and by yearning for the day of peace and abundance that could be instead. We must press, then, to the background of our consciousness much that is reality, while we help children create for themselves a more wholesome world than we have known.

For they must create for themselves a new world. It must be increasingly their own. They must come to know the problems of the old world as they form the new. We must in the beginning guard them from hate, and build in them positive loves which later in self-knowledge will not betray them into panic nor yet into trusting beyond wisdom.

Such teaching may not come through fairy tales of a world that's never been, nor through preachments and mottoes and fables alone, nor through utter protection from reality. We must arrange a world which provides such security as their youthfulness warrants, but a world real to them in problems commensurate with their strength and experience; a world in which affection is not always easy, but in which those about are normally responsive to trust; a world which sets a high premium on that quality of personality which is the blossoming of a well-nourished body and character harmoniously and generously developed. There must be habitual practice in democratic control. There must be respect for the great, reverence for the eternal.

Ten years ago there was difficulty in finding outlets of a socially useful nature

for smaller children. But here and there far-seeing teachers, moved by such impulses as above described, have been discovering, one by one, little avenues of approach. One may glean such instances from various issues of *Childhood Education*, *Progressive Education* and other periodicals and books. Efforts are now being made to gather examples of such approaches.

In general the problem is made simpler if we remember two things: first, that children live, in large degree, in a world of their own, and that their own problems have to them much the same magnitude that our problems have to us. Fusses and affrays are their diplomatic disputes and wars, and returnings to play are their treaties of peace; and second that very minor participation by children in adult problems may grip the child's imagination and be a means of the enlarging of his personality far beyond our belief. Much depends on whether they are really allowed to share in a socially profound sense. Children soon tire of helping an adult by merely handing on request or command now the saw, now the hammer, and now again a nail. Especially is this true if the object being made is solely for adult use, or unknown to the child. But let the child feel a part of the purpose, let him contribute to the measure of his ability; and let us be a little patient with his awkwardness and his weakness, be duly appreciative, and he expands healthfully, radiantly. Let a small child lay three bricks in a wall, and within a few days the wall has become his. (his, except perhaps that his father helped him a little). I have seen this over and over, as with a child who

took the first spade of earth from the foundation of a building and enjoyed the feeling of having helped materially in the construction of the whole.

There can be a danger, of course, of exaggeration in any direction, of shielding children too completely or too long from knowledge of things as they are, or of permitting too much self-approval for minor participation in adult enterprises. But one may watch, particularly in some of the pioneer community developments, as in the Macedonia Cooperative Community, the very natural induction of children into a pattern of Christian democracy by stages that are gradual and sound. Carolyn brings an appropriately small bucket of water and paper cups to elders who are constructing a dam to create a fifty acre lake. "Thank you, Carolyn," one hears, "so you too are helping to build the dam." Or one hears Virginia Ann talking to herself. She has been on a walk with a TVA expert who has come in the effort to develop a new thin-shelled variety of black walnuts from a locally discovered tree of exceptional quality. "This green grasshopper," she muses, "belongs to the green grasshopper family and this brown grasshopper belongs to the brown grasshopper family. I must take them with me to Knoxville and identify the species."

In the wrong world, a wrong child's world, children will inherit and become the victims of all that is out of kilter in our own. Nourished in sunshine and the warmth of wholesome affection, learning to solve their own problems as they meet them, and sharing ever more broadly in socially useful enterprises our children may build a world such as we shall never see.

OUR highest allegiance is to the human species as a *whole*. Specifically, this means that the democrat as democrat cannot kill, or help to kill, even those who threaten his own existence. Democracy is a spirit and a technique for the promotion of human welfare—and no man's well-being is advanced by first murdering him.—George Hartmann in *Frontiers of Democracy*.

Let Us Be Gay

For four years studios of various kinds have provided opportunities for creative experiences for the teachers attending the annual Association for Childhood Education meeting. At the recent meeting at Milwaukee, April 29-May 3, 1940, Miss Bain served as director of the studios, and had such a good time doing so that we have persuaded her to prepare this account of what went on. We are glad to say in reply to Miss Bain's appeal in her last paragraph that studio groups are being sponsored by many local A.C.E. Branches throughout the country and that they are increasing in popularity and richness. Miss Bain is principal of the Wheelock School, Boston, and chairman of the Board of Editors of Childhood Education.

CONVENTIONS are serious occasions, at least, to the planning committees and to the speakers who toil for anguishing months, or in some cases, minutes, in the preparation of sober content for the benefit of the profession. They are not that serious for us listeners, of course, since we can go and come at will. In retrospect, we can recall taking a great deal of liberty with our convention time so as to carry out our own investigations in the convention city, its shops, its natural scenery, and its civic developments. We've organized our own convention groups at out-of-the-way restaurants where, in reunion with friends, we have sampled strange foods and made our own unprepared speeches. It seems that these gay occasions of abandon are the ones we remember long after the speeches are forgotten. And all told,

haven't we learned a lot from these self-organized convention programs?

Long ago the A.C.E. caught on to our tendencies toward unprepared speeches and capitalized on them by providing study classes in which we can talk informally. It organized excursions, also, to places of interest in the convention city which might never be made available to unsponsored groups. If it were not for the fact that we all pitched in and helped make these changes ourselves, it would look as if we had been out-smarted. Now, we find ourselves voluntarily curtailing our free investigations during the A.C.E. Conventions since there are so many chances to do similar things in a better way in the conference itself.

In the past four years the A.C.E. has had studios where delightful things can be done which were never possible for us to include in our own sessions. The studios were not originally supposed to be gay, but they turned out that way, and what is the harm in this serious world if they did? Still, one wonders just why they did.

During the four years of experimentation with the studios the opportunities for expression have been various, including singing, making and playing musical instruments, bodily rhythmic expression, crafts, painting, writing, choral speaking, making anecdotal records of illustrative incidents offered in study groups, community excursions, and work with laboratory equipment in elementary science. This fluid experimentation has indicated that although the word studio may be a misnomer when used to indicate all the types of activities which have been included

under it, there are many forms of expression which are enjoyable and profitable for teachers to engage in at a convention and many more, as yet untried, which may have similar values.

The Writing Groups

An illustration of the procedure which has been followed in the conduct of the studios is furnished by a writing project. Here they were, a miscellany of teachers gathered in an improvised classroom and seated at card tables where pen, ink, and paper were suggestive of creativity in the letters. But it takes more than the inspiration furnished by the tools of work, of course, to fan genius into flame. But many of these teachers came with ideas of something they wanted to express or something they had written which they wanted to have criticized. And so, experts were provided as leaders to help them. The organizing leader surveyed the kind of things that were wanted: writing original short

stories and verse for children; writing and dramatizing a play; criticism of professional manuscripts already written; criticism of accounts of work done with children in guiding their writing and dramatics.

In no time the work took form. Several uninterrupted hours and four successive days with similar blocks of time lay before the group to use as it chose. The program in the main studio was planned to accord with the pattern of group interests and provided for exposition and conferences on different phases of the work at different hours. The work of individuals and small groups went forward on a correlated schedule devised to fit their special needs. The leaders were assigned to the work in accordance with their special fitness for leadership in the type of endeavor scheduled for a given time.

The development of a play furnishes a good example of work in one of the special lines of creative activity in this studio. After preliminary discussion and



Making block-prints in an A.C.E. studio

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exposition in the studio, the group interested in play writing secluded itself to work out a drama. As the writing progressed, they conferred with the leader who was experienced in dramatics. At scheduled hours they came back to the main studio for further exposition and group discussion related to dramatics.

When well into the writing, they became fired with the desire to produce their play. It seemed that their ambition knew no bounds. They did not, in four days, complete the task, of course, but they did do a unified job which gave them a taste of each aspect of it and which was rounded out into a satisfactory ending. They planned the whole play, wrote and produced one scene. They solicited and received the help of the art studio for staging and costuming. On the fifth day of the convention the one completed scene was given with a flourish and an inner satisfaction of Noel Coward proportions by these author-actor-producers.

Not all the studio participants were as ambitious as these. But who shall say which type chose the better part? There were those who liked better to watch the experts at work and listen to their discussions and expositions, to see the results produced by their fellows and to examine the samples of children's work and the books related to the subject which were lavishly displayed. In this way they could dip into all the studios and take a little from each, maybe just a feeling for things or perhaps the specific help needed.

The Music Studio

The music studio is a popular one whenever it is provided. Under skilled leadership opportunity is afforded for singing, experimenting with xylophones, home-made drums, and similar instruments, trying out rhythmic patterns in bodily movement when an expert is at the piano and



At work with wood and tin

even creating and recording original songs. (Mrs. Osbourn and Miss Milton describe the activities of this studio in their article on page 210).

This is another place where an observer marvels at the pattern of activities which may be evolved to give opportunity for the several forms of expression without having all at the same time clashing discordantly with each other. When hoards of convention delegates descend during the most popular hours of the day, there are usually provided activities such as singing and dancing in which large numbers can participate. Then for those interested in the more specialized and exact pursuits of instrumentation and composi-

tion, hours are scheduled for special work.

At times when all scheduled activities appear to be at a good stopping place, the leaders sometimes abandon their posts and it is at such times, perhaps, more than any others, that the spirit of the slogan, "Let Us Be Gay," appears to be rampant. Volunteer pianists accompany spontaneous singing of song after song and on the

Some express themselves in writing while others work at looms



outskirts of the group assembled about the piano, one may observe amateur dancers and whistlers, if one has the temerity to look rather than participate. And numbered among them are often those whom you would never believe had it in them and who would never admit it themselves in an organized group where others are known to be watching.

The studio in arts and crafts is likely to be boisterously lacking in self-consciousness. The material and the things to be



done demand the attention of the person and take him out of himself. But again, the indelicate observer who feels he must look will see flushed cheeks behind a painting of sunset colors, bright eyes above a piece of weaving on a loom, and gritted teeth and tensed smile over a block print that is being pounded with such venom that it seems there can be none left in the soul. Work in this studio is usually individual rather than multiple in its organization but it is frequently very cooperative. It has already been noted that at the most recent convention in Milwaukee the art studio contributed help in costuming and staging to forward the work of the writing groups. They also gave direction to those who were inspired to make their own music instruments.

Some Concomitants Not Measurable

Not everyone availed himself of the opportunity to concentrate his program in one area by working in the studio related to his study class. Some did but we are not all that consistent, nor do we all dig that deeply. The studios were free of any restrictions other than general convention registration. Many a one paused only long enough to wire a battery so as to see a light bulb flash or hear a bell ring and then went on his way to something else.

What happened to the person when the light flashed or the bell rang is hard to say. But it must be clear by this time that the A.C.E. studios are provided for the purpose of doing something for and to those of us who participate. They have a distinct professional flavor and many a teacher leaves the studios with her notebook full of suggestions for her work with children. Still, the major function is that of service to us as teachers accustomed as we are to thinking so seriously about the growth of children that we often forget about our own. To make the blood flow a little faster, the eye see a little keener,

the mind grasp a few more ideas and put them in more accurate relationship, the hand hew a little straighter, the step be a little firmer and at the same time lighter, the assistance to a neighbor a little readier, the laugh a little freer needs, most of all, the liberation of powers within oneself into channels too often dammed up. The studios give these opportunities.

There is a temptation to devote space to a discussion of the practical difficulties involved in offering studio opportunities to convention visitors. It is not easy to set them up in hotels or borrowed school rooms with imported staff and with equipment of both local and remote derivation. It is not easy, and yet anyone with half an eye can see that the whole fabric is homespun and in that sense simple. We believe in the studios and are willing to do them by hand in order to have them. And it turns out, as it does in many other instances, that the homespun quality furnishes part of their charm and value. A critic may say that the weave is too coarse; that there is danger of sacrificing quality of work to expediency. We admit this danger, but we are convinced that enough values are apparent to warrant continued experimentation. One of the values may well be the very necessity for struggle. Each year points the way toward doing the work better. Next year's story will reveal innovations never attempted before.

Again there is an urge to appeal to the editor for more space to suggest that more of this sort of activity might be done by teachers in their own locations. A chance to work in a laboratory, an opportunity to paint or sing or do one of a thousand things may not seem as important as the work of the curriculum committee or the study class on international relations; but if such opportunities lift the mind and the soul of a group of teachers, they may, as a consequence, lift the soul of a nation more than at first you might think.



By BETH NEAL OSBOURN and JENNIE LOU MILTON

Creative Experiences in Music and the Dance

"All human beings whether consciously or unconsciously are hungry for creative experiences with music and bodily rhythm." Mrs. Osbourn and Miss Milton describe two creative experiences in music and rhythms of teachers who attended the A.C.E. national meeting at Milwaukee, April 29-May 3, 1940, and point out some of the essential elements in making an experience creative. Mrs. Osbourn is teacher of music at the

Horace Mann School, Columbia University, and Miss Milton is special writer for the Board of Christian Education of the Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee. Both Mrs. Osbourn and Miss Milton directed group activities in the A.C.E. studio described in this article.

IN THE workshops on the eleventh floor of the Schroeder Hotel in Milwaukee during the 1940 meeting of the Association

for Childhood Education an elderly woman timidly approached a table half hidden by a large column. On the table were several musical instruments. She glanced furtively around. No one was in sight. The dull red rubber tightly drawn across the top of a tone barrel caught her attention. Gently she touched it. A slight tap from her fingers brought forth a soft, muffled sound, almost imperceptible but lovely. Near by lay a drum stick. With trembling hands she picked it up. Quickly and awkwardly she tapped the dull red drum head. Again there came that soft, muffled sound, but somewhat louder this time like the beat of an African tom-tom far away in the jungles. She quivered. Her breath came quickly. She tapped it again. And again.

There was a rustling sound behind her. "Are you going to play us a tune on the drum?" asked the pleasant voice of a visitor to the studio.

"Oh, oh, no! I was just looking," she answered quickly. In a moment she had slipped away behind one of the many columns with which the room was filled.

But one of the workers in the studio had seen her as she strayed from table to table. About half an hour later this worker, as if by accident, walked beside her on the way to the elevator.

"Aren't the workshops interesting?" exclaimed this studio worker with enthusiasm. "I can scarcely wait to make one of those drums. Have you made one yet?"

"No, I haven't," she answered, but there was a light in her eyes.

In the rush of many activities, this particular studio worker did not see her elderly friend for two days. Then suddenly she caught a glimpse of her at the closing hour. Her hair was disheveled. Her dress and the coat which hung on her arm were spattered with paint. But in her arms was a drum gaily decorated in red, blue, and yellow, and her eyes were shining.

"What a pity that you got paint on your

dress and coat!" exclaimed a fellow-worker. "Do you think it will come out?"

"That doesn't matter," she replied indifferently.

She began to beat her drum, hesitantly at first. One, two, three, four,—one, two, three, four,—one, two, three, four, five. Before she reached the elevator she was playing with increasing confidence a gay little tune of her own creation. As she drew near the crowd, she ceased playing, but slowly, as if reluctantly.

"That is a pretty drum," said someone.

"Thank you. I like it," she responded, a tender light in her eyes.

As she left the elevator and started down the hotel corridor to her room, she began to play again very softly the gay little tune she had composed.

An Experience in Creating a Song

There had been some experimentation with musical instruments, a bit of dancing to the accompaniment of drums, enthusiastic group singing, and feverish making of drums from tin cans and wooden kegs. These activities were very interesting, but there was one teacher whose most vital need in music had not been met. One night she went to the leader of the music studio. "Could we try to create some songs?" she asked. "I encourage my children to make up their own songs, and they like to do it; but I am not a musician, and I need some experience myself in creating."

A few friends were approached on the matter. Soon there were five or six persons who had expressed a desire to experiment in creating songs. The leader of the music group posted a notice in the studio that at ten o'clock the next morning a small group of persons interested in composing songs would meet near the piano.

At the appointed hour ten persons had assembled. Some one who knew the leader asked her to tell about the third grade

that had become so interested in the story of "Die Meistersinger" that they had dramatized it, composing their own words and music. As the leader talked, she showed pictures of the children at work on their play. The pictures had been hanging in the studio all the time but had attracted little attention. Now they suddenly became alive. Members of the group began to ask questions.

After the discussion of this rather ambitious undertaking by young children in creating music, the leader talked of other simpler, more everyday experiences which had led children to spontaneous song.

Suddenly the studio leader looked out the window near by. It was snowing—yes, in Milwaukee in May! "Look, it is snowing here now!" exclaimed the leader. "Perhaps we should like to make some songs of our own about the snow—or something else," she added with a laugh.

Yes, the snow was beautiful. Composing a song about the snow seemed quite natural. The group tried, tried very hard, but words would not come. Whenever they tried to think about snow, their very thoughts were drowned by the *bang, bang, bang, bang, pound, pound, pound* of hammers in the adjoining workshop. Finally some one ventured, "I can't think of anything for that pounding."

"Then, perhaps we can pick out the rhythm of the pounding," said the leader. "Listen carefully. How does it go?"

Immediately the group began to try to find the most representative rhythm of the hammers. When they had found one that suited them, they sang it over and over again. Little by little the rhythm took hold of them. Then words began to come. "Oh, I like that—just the first line!" "No, that's not quite right. What should it be?" "Yes, that's better!" They talked eagerly among themselves.

In a few moments four lines had been completed, four very satisfying lines about

printing and pounding. The group sang their song again and again. By this time other persons had joined the group.

"It is pretty when we repeat it," some one said, "but we should have something else in the middle."

"Would you like to add another stanza?" asked the leader. "What are they making back there?"

"Part of them are making curtains and draperies," some one replied.

There was more experimenting with words. Soon two lines were accepted by all, lines about curtains for a schoolroom window and draperies for a home.

"Now, do you want the same kind of melody for those lines, or another mood?" asked the leader.

"Oh, another mood!" some one cried. "High, light, and joyous, but in a minor key like the tiny tappings we hear above the pounding."

With that introduction, the melody came quickly. The leader suggested one slight change. The three parts were put together. The effect was delightful.

"Incidentally, you have employed two devices which are very good in music," said the leader, "contrast and repetition. From the standpoint of music, this is good form."

The group was exhilarated over its creation. They sang the song over and over. Others joined them. During the next few days people were humming or singing it all over the hotel. Finally on the last day it was adopted officially as the A.C.E. workshop song. Was it a great song? No, but a good song and a genuine creative product. Moreover, henceforth no one was annoyed by the pounding of the hammers, for it had ceased to be an irritating noise to them, but was music instead.

What Makes An Experience Creative?

What are the values in creative experiences for teachers? What makes an experience creative, anyway? What conditions

are conducive to creativity, especially in music and the dance? And what is the job of the master teacher, or guide? These questions touch on many vital points, and points which artists, philosophers, and teachers have long pondered without coming to satisfying conclusions. It is not strange, therefore, that the writers of this article should hesitate to express definite opinions. In the light of the experiences described above and many similar experiences, however, we are attempting, not to define a creative experience, but to make a few observations which seem to us to be pertinent and significant.

First, all human beings, whether consciously or unconsciously, are hungry for creative experiences with music and bodily rhythm. Such experiences tend to release them from fear and throttling inhibitions, bringing them exhilaration, joy, self-confidence, forgetfulness of self, and a zest for life and adventure. As soon as anything in the environment is used creatively it becomes a constructive element in the individual's life, although previously it may have been an irritating, disintegrating force; therefore, limitations need not prevent creative living, but may become the materials from which loveliness is made.

In these days of stress and strain it seems very important that people recognize fully the integrating power of creative experiences. Fortunately, one creative experience conditions a person in favor of other creative experiences. Venturing with others in such experiences leads to increased friendliness. This enriched living, coupled with the better understanding through first-hand experience of what it means to compose music or create a dance, should make any teacher a better teacher.

But most teachers—in fact, most people—are shy about attempting to create, particularly in an area in which they are not sure of their ability. Unfortunately, relatively few elementary school teachers in

the United States feel much confidence in their ability to create in the field of music or the dance. It is essential to lose oneself in the thing being created; therefore, any act or comment by another person which focuses attention on oneself hinders the act of creating. For this reason, a good teacher keeps himself largely in the background and lets the individual, or group, follow its own idea or urge, offering encouragement, suggestions, and technical aid only when they are clearly needed.

Although thorough technical knowledge and skill on the part of the teacher are very important in making it possible for less experienced persons to obtain results of a high art quality, it is often surprising what both children and adults can do for themselves in music and the dance if the atmosphere of the room or studio is conducive to creative effort.

There are two attitudes which seem essential for any teacher who strives to stimulate and guide the creative responses of others, attitudes which often are overlooked: first, absolute faith in the ability of others to create; and, second, recognition that it is the creative experience which is most significant, not the product or the media. Both of these attitudes are needed to restrain a teacher from rushing in too soon with suggestions or technical aid. After all, if the experience is the most important thing, and a teacher has utmost faith in the creative powers of others, he can afford to be calm and wait. His confidence fosters confidence in the others. Of course, he can never be sure that a product of any particular form will emerge—it may be a song, a dance, a poem, plans for a cook book, or just a rich experience in living; but if the atmosphere is right, he can have faith that whatever emerges will be worthwhile and creative in nature. And it does seem to be true that sincere, natural responses of human beings tend to produce good art forms.

Art-2

"Not until these children had something for which they could respect themselves could we hope for anything other than unsocial behavior." How she set about to help Negro, Mexican, and white children—economic refugees with low I.Q.'s—get that "something" through creative experiences is described by Mrs. Cole.¹ Her realistic, objective understanding and appreciation of these children as human beings and her sensitivity to their many handicaps give us an inspiring picture of what we mean by real teacher-child relationships. Mrs. Cole is a teacher in the Los Angeles, California, public schools.

"I PICKED mine up! . . . I done my share!"

And there they sat, twenty of them—Negro, Mexican and white—I.Q.'s 57 to 70 some odd, with wads of clay all over the floor—clay that had missed its aim.

I explained that we were going to stay until the room was clean. I sent for pans of water and some rags which soon got full of clay and turned the water white. When the floor dried it looked as if it had been white-washed. But seeing them grunting and squudging around on all fours relieved my tired and aggravated spirit, and the magic therapy of hard manual work I felt sure was affecting theirs.

"For work like what we here's doing we ought to get paid for!" Hubert, their leader, was grumbling as he included his neighbor in a great swipe of his rag.

I had had an idea that the creative re-

¹ The photographs used to illustrate this article are of normal children and not of those described in this article. They are reproduced through the courtesy of The John Day Company, publishers of Mrs. Cole's recent book, *The Arts in the Classroom*, a review of which appears on page 238 of this issue.

sponse had nothing to do with intelligence quotient, that it was an emotional thing, that it was an unfolding process—a removing of inhibitions and inferiority feelings. Why not a development room?

I remembered Concha who had been taken from our room at California Street and sent to "Development." Too sensitive and easily embarrassed to register well in an individual I.Q. test; so good and kind that even in her hour of tragedy she had thought of other people. "Do not feel bad and do not cry, for dear teacher I, Concha Valdez, am going away," she had written on the little note she slipped me.

With children like Concha I had thought to spend much of my time in the free approach to the creative arts. But where was Concha? The group I had envisioned as gathered around me in mother-surrogate fashion was up shouting, "I ain't to blame! He done this to my mother!" The only inferiority feelings and inhibitions here were my own.

Pictures were already being made and circulated, remarkable in their biological faithfulness! I had thought a little clay therapy would be just the thing. This was the end of my lesson. What some of them had made with their clay only a psychoanalyst would guess.

Periods of fighting and fussing were only relieved by times when the boys went to the "basement." All that was needed was for one to start the trek and the rest would follow. If I ventured a remonstrance I was assured of the dire results of their not being allowed to go. I found myself spending a good part of my first day corralling them.

All about me were teachers whom news had reached that I was coming to try some



Ever increasing variety of movement

creative ideas with the primary development room. I would have liked to avoid their kind eyes at lunch time. "Absolute impotence; absolute ignominy," was the way I described myself when they questioned. At the end of the first day I went home feeling as if horses had trampled on me. It was no use to expect any sympathy from my family. "Well, you asked for it!" they would say. And I had.

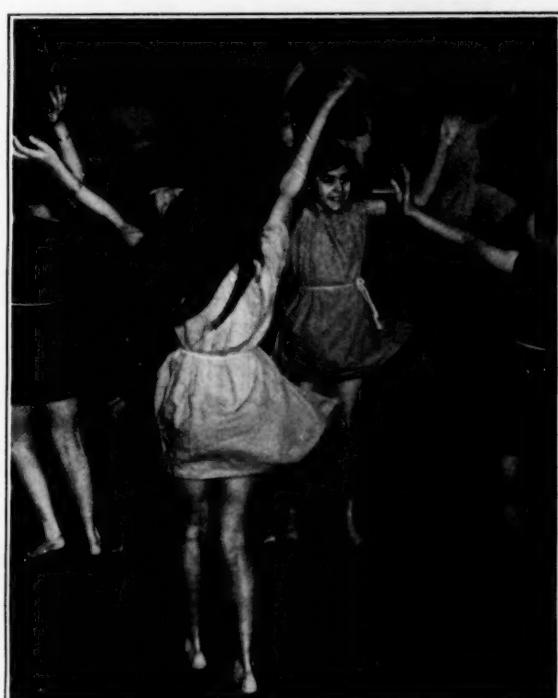
At recess it was my job to follow the group to the playground. I pretended not to hear their grumblings mingled with thwarted rage. "Dat ole teacher . . . just spoil everything . . . make us work hard, den we can't have no fun . . ." as I held them to the rules and saw that there was no gangster business.

I tried to take stock of the situation. By the end of the second day, except for a single one or two making a dive out the door farthest from me, they were no longer going to the basement in gangs. My voice,

so carefully modulated through the years, was beginning to meet the need half way. True, my half dozen little girls were still chattering off to the side like a bunch of magpies and my Oklahoma boy was lying on the fish-bowl table in his long tweed coat, sulking and mumbling, "You skunk! You skunk!" because I didn't choose him to answer the buzzer.

There is Dancing, Clay-making and Singing

Dancing! That was it. I would start them dancing. In the past I had been rather proud of my room's dancing. Free dancing—"dancing our own way"—we had called it. Such dancing is not concerned with steps artificially imposed. The teacher's big job is to break down the embarrassment and self-consciousness the child has been building since he was an infant. When he is



Dancing our own way

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free, the dancing will come tumbling out in thrilling fashion.

But here, instead of having to struggle to get them out of their seats, I was faced with the need of help to restrain them! My "Okie" boy proved to be the dance sensation of the room. His lady's tweed coat hung parson fashion down past his knees. He would wheel about in faltering circles, pointing a stark forefinger at the ceiling and then striking it across his breast—one, two, three—while bringing his heel down with a heavy thump-thump. Such dancing we had never seen before. Even the children sensed its mystic quality.

I asked him where he learned to dance so well. "Oh," he said, "I learned it at the dancin' hall. I go almost every night to the dancin' hall. It costs two-bits but it's worth it! I go with my girl-fren'. I put my arm around her and I frow her up in the air. Sometimes she comes down on the cement floor. Sometimes I put my hands around her neck and I frow her," he confided.

We were going better on other fronts. The "Okie" boy worked half a morning making a farm with clay. In one corner was a hood-like place. "That's the grave to put the animals in," he explained. "See, I got some in there already."

We became so good at clay that three of the boys demonstrated claymaking before the rest of the teachers. They made angels. From time to time I held up their angels to show that it was true. "The teacher need not have the ideas. The children will have lots of them" and so the angels wore halos, braids, crosses and carried holy-books. Attached beneath the arm of one was a box-like square of clay. Hubert, embarrassed that I might guess wrong, hastened to explain, "It's her pocket-book!"

"Of course, every angel should have a pocket-book." I turned the figure so that everyone could see her lovely top-knot and halo-fixings. "How else could she keep so lovely looking?"

"I got to put de little wings on de haid," explained another at one point.

"Oh, what a good idea! Do they have them there?" I asked casually.

"I asked de church-man, 'Do dey have 'em,' and he say yes."

"Sweet and Low" was one song they all knew by heart. One morning found me with fresh courage and a desire to give the children a real experience. We passed paints and paper at the tables and then gathered around in a circle. I told about the dangerous life of a fisherman as he went forth in all weathers. I pictured the brave wives who never knew but that the sea would be their loved one's burial ground. I described the mother as she sang to her babe:

Low, low, breathe and blow

Wind of the western sea . . .

Father come back to his babe in the nest . . ."

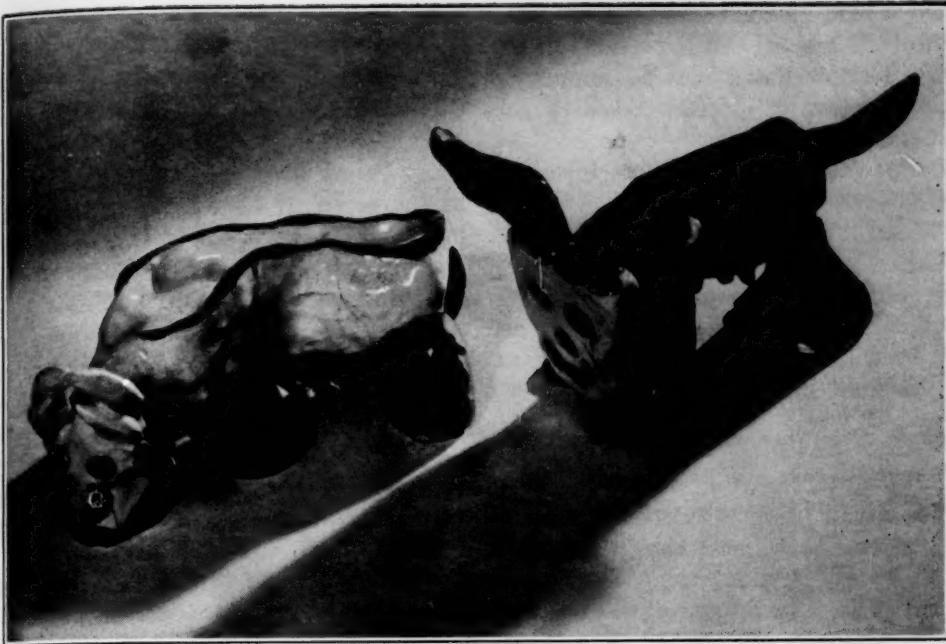
We began to sway the baby back and forth as we sang. Then I began to chant softly, "Now when you begin to get the feeling down in your bones, slip to your place and paint the picture."

Immediately there was a tremendous rush and clatter as they sent chairs hurtling to be first. I called them back, saying calmly, "When you have the feeling, others will know. It will show on your face, in the way you walk and all through you. You won't be knocking each other down either," I added.

There was a hushed feeling for a few minutes while they painted that bespoke an interest almost as great as in their rowing and fussing. Almost, but not quite.

Gradually I became accustomed to their work chatter and did not feel so bewildered by it: "Jack used to live right across from my farm. I used to let you ride on my hoss, didn't I?" And the other boy, very pleased with the idea, would wag his head in agreement.

"Me and Arvin's brides!" he would add.



Why worry about how a cow really ought to be?



I closed my eyes and seen an angel and made one like I seen it

Now and then there would be a philosophical discussion: "What's outside the world? I know there must be something outside the world," Hubert asked of the boy beside him.

There was no answer, so I stated, "Other worlds, Hubert."

"What?" he asked, puzzled.

"Other worlds," I repeated.

He pondered a minute and then said, "Well, what's in the creases?" putting his little hard black hands together, back to back, to show his meaning.

There is Designing and Printing of Blocks

We began design, working toward block prints. There were days with black crayon on paper, uncovering the child's own rhythmic flow, getting him away from an adult-imposed type of thing. "Ourselves Dancing" gave us a wonderful subject. Later, an echo of their clay angels crept in to give us a naive mixture of the two.

"Children dancin' down below; angels dancin' in de sky," one of them explained.

"Dey look like eagle's wings. If I was an eagle I'd fly down and slap someone in de face and fly back up."

"My, but you're strong," I said admiringly to Hubert as he pounded the edges of his block on the cloth with a puny fist.

"I wish my grandfather was here," he said. "He could nail anything with his bare fist."

"But I can't do it!" my twins would whine. And over and over I would say, "But you are doing it, doing it beautifully!"

I came by just in time to say to Hubert one day, "Now that you have dug out their mouths all white, what are you going to do about their faces? If you carve them out there will be no contrast. It will be all white and not very interesting."

He struggled a minute and then said

bravely, "I wants 'em dark 'cause dey's on de stage and dey ain't no lights!" disregarding the fact that his own face was as dark as any lightless stage.

How can I describe their block prints? Block prints where the process was just a means to an end— weirdly beautiful patterns thrown out to fill space with rhythm and distinction.

"Children, the linoleum won't make the block print nor will the finest tools. What is it that will make it beautiful?"

"To make it your own way! From inside yourself!" they would shout.

"Don't ever try to make things like anyone else. We want to be able to look at your pattern and say, 'That's Ricardo's block print.' " And I would cast my eye around for those patterns that had come down uncorrupted by adult influence.

Over and over this philosophy we went.

I can see Loren wriggling his cutter as he went down the vestment of his two-foot high angel. It gave him a good feeling inside that his wriggling made a lovely jagged effect. Or one making the eyebrows of his figures like a garden rake—plain at the bottom, with great teeth going up. These same teeth were repeated on halo and wing pattern, shooting always strong and true.

I can see Arvin, coming very early to school with his own great piece of linoleum, after I had made excuses to keep him from our best. Without any guidance on my part, he designed the whole thing before school and dug it that morning—strange, eerie figures from the netherworld, filling space beautifully.

Sometimes a child's very unwillingness or lack of ability to finish his block worthily made for strange, rhythmic effects.

There is Showing of Wares and Sharing Experiences

At last came the hour of our great triumph. Eight of my artists and a big pile

of block prints drove to the art museum nearby. The director lived in no ivory tower and adjusted himself to the situation perfectly. "How are you boys? How would you like some ice cream?" he greeted them and flipped a half-dollar in the air. They were his from that moment, holding high their prints for him to see; some made from blocks half as tall as they.

"Dat's by a little ole girl!" said one, scornfully, but rising to heights of objectivity a moment later with a dispassionate, "It's good, though."

"I agree with you," said the director, studying hard.

"Oh, look at ole 'Snaggle-tooth!'" spoke up one, chuckling and pointing to the huge print opposite. "He look like he been eatin' watermelon!"

"Yeah, he's got a mouf like Marfa Ray!"

"It fits in here good," said one, showing with his hands.

"Only two things de matter with it—two places he hasn't digged out."

And so they were analyzing, evaluating for the head of a great museum.

Then came a day when important people came to look us over. My little girls snuggled around as I attempted to show a pile of block prints. Even if I had wanted to hold out a feeble two or three from scrutiny, I wouldn't have had half a chance. "Where's mine? But where's mine?" they demanded. Weaving in their names had helped to build their ego, as well as fill the space.

All this while the original distractions and annoyances had continued to greater or less degree. Even toward the end of the year a precious block print hanging served as an old rag to someone whose painty hands needed wiping. A carefully saved large piece of linoleum turned up one morning with a four-letter word carved across it—a word even the non-spellers knew how to spell. The clay color for firing, fifty cents a pound—my fifty cents—

was used to paint the window sills. After a while it all seemed the logical, normal type of thing. Such are the possibilities of human adjustment.

Who could say, given tolerably poor material, to what extent emotional upsets and family rows confuse and bewilder an already meager understanding?

"If my father comes back my mother's goin' to send for the po'-lice! And dey'll put him in jail so he'll niver git out!"

Poor game Hubert! Besides his black skin, he had huge, pendulous lips which alone would have brought a sensitive child much suffering.

"You old big mouf, you!" he would say in exasperation when he wanted to hurt someone most.

The colored woman custodian said to me one day, "I told him, 'You're not so pretty you can afford to be so mean!'" He wasn't safe even from those of his own color.

One day a professor, to whom I had shown our block prints, came in. While he was there we would dance for him. Nobody could dance better than we, I argued to myself nervously.

The record began to play. But where was Hubert—our head man, our leader? Without his support the others seemed glued to the spot. Hubert was in the corner, tearing a piece of cloth into a great fringe and holding it over his face like a horse's fly-scare.

"Can you help us get started, Hubert?" I asked, as casually as I could, considering the visitor. Not a budge. I used a little more pressure, taking off the record to give a fresh start. Still no go. Then I became conscious of a thumping down under the tables. "Freddie's tying up de feet to de chairs and de tables," chuckled one tolerantly. Then someone let out a yell, hauling off with a great kick.

But our visitor's time was up and he had to go. He got up without a word. I

followed, without a word. We went down the hall without a word. Finally he burst forth, "They try your patience!"

Then came the last week of school, and the whole school's closing program. Hubert and Loren danced their favorite, "Funeral March of a Marionette." They slunk along the floor and then leaped high in the air as if they were shot when the phonograph record gave an unexpected lurch. But one could see through their affected bravado; it was taking plenty of courage to face such an audience.

Well, they came through all right, I decided. A bit scared, but game. Now they would sing. Hubert had suggested it. He carried the main load, Loren just following in little bursts from time to time:

Go to sleep, my little buckaroo

It was from a tiny acorn that a great oak grew

So go to sleep, my little buckaroo.

I could scarcely see or swallow. Poor scared little buckaroos. Standing up before a huge audience of children who were being promoted from one regular room to another.

"What's de use of bein' promoted?" Hubert had asked me one day when I reminded him that he was to go to the upper development room. "Dey's both crazy

rooms! It don't make no matter, nohow."

Would these children remember the dancing through life as I remembered the marching of my kindergarten days, timid little thing that I had been? No one bothered to free me, to convince me of my own worth, to give me confidence so that I could respond vigorously to the music. Yet I could remember the magic thrill of moving in tempo to that piano 'till my dying day. Would they remember the excitement and enthusiasm when their clay was fired and their blocks first printed?

I do know that the dancing, clay-making, painting, and blockprinting served as an instrument through which I could offer praise and recognition. Not until these children had something for which they could respect themselves could we hope for anything other than unsocial behavior. My interest had made itself felt, giving them an interest. Not until we found a cohesive something could we hope for a group feeling of loyalty and general rapport. The confidence and success gained through the creative arts helped make reading and writing less difficult.

And for my part, I had gained in patience and understanding and had convinced myself, at least, that Art-Q has little to do with I.Q.

From a Mexican Child's First Reader

I shall be a farmer, when I am big, Mother dear;
Like my father, I shall be a farmer.

I shall have my home—well built,
A pair of oxen and a little cow,
A hutch of rabbits, many hens, some beehives,
And a garden.

Near and far around my house will be a field.
I shall be a farmer.

I shall have a horse, a gun, too,
That the crops, fruit of my labor,

They shall not steal, they shall not seek for,
Those greedy landlords.

And for my people, my suffering people,
When I work, I shall be a farmer.

Fighting always, all my life,
These words shall be my guide:
All the land, all, every bit of it
For the man who works it.

When I am big, Mother dear,
Like my father, I shall be a farmer.

From *Simiente*, Libro 2, by G. Lucio. Courtesy *The Horn Book*

By LUCIA McBRIDE

Creative Adventures in The Nursery School

Improving the school environment and evaluating its potential contribution to the development of children are two important phases in today's educational planning. Lucia McBride, formerly director of the nursery school at Laurel school, Shaker Heights, Cleveland, Ohio, and now at the McKinley nursery school, Lakewood, describes a nursery school art environment that brought forth creative expression from the children and contributed positively to their social development.

THE ENVIRONMENT for the arts of the nursery school children at Laurel began with creative adventures in nearby meadows. October was devoted to outdoor experiences which stimulated the children's innate love of touching, smelling, looking and listening. Flowers were gathered, trees climbed, bugs examined, butterflies followed, and bird calls heard. This wider use of the out-of-doors resulted in spontaneous bits of song, chanting, poetry, dancing, and a heightened awareness of sounds, colors, smells, textures.

A modest farm situated near the school afforded a variety of experiences. The children made friends with the farmer and often followed him behind the farm horses in the fields. They saw the mangers where the horses ate, and fed them with sugar and hay. They took short rides on the pony, and frequently shelled corn for the chickens. They liked to make the grain separator go round, and enjoyed playing

in the hay and storage barn. They watched the farmer work in his vegetable and flower garden, and gathered apples in the orchard. They waded through high grass in the fields.

By the time November came with its cold and rainy weather the children's stimulating outdoor experiences overflowed into individual explorations of the possibilities of painting, modeling, dancing, singing, listening to music, composing tunes, and enjoyment of art objects.

The situation indoors reflected as nearly as possible the beauty of the outdoors. We established an atmosphere of creative inspiration believing implicitly in the importance of beauty in the lives of little children. It was our opinion that it is as desirable to expose children to great pictures, ceramics, sculpture and textiles as it is for them to hear compositions by distinguished music masters. We had several fine carefully chosen pictures or pieces of sculpture or textiles always placed in one of our rooms. Some of these paintings were originals, and pictures by artists both living and dead were chosen with a range of subject matter, style, and color. They were changed from time to time and varied with exhibitions of work by the children.

It is impossible to evaluate the degree of art enjoyment and the amount of creative stimulation which our exhibitions encouraged. We felt, however, that a large portion of the children responded to them. Willie, three, expressed his delight over a watercolor by a contemporary artist by stroking the picture and exclaiming, "Oh,

how nice, oh, how nice that barn." A number of children expressed real joy (oh's and ah's) over beautiful modern Japanese prints of turtles, mice, fish, and birds.

No better example of the joy invoked by an effective Swedish pottery cat could be given than that displayed by a five-year-old graduate who, coming back to the nursery school to visit for a morning, rushed up to the bookcase, reached for the familiar cherished cat, held it tenderly in her arms and stroked it.

We found that it was desirable for children to have the experience of handling sculpture and art objects, believing that beauty encourages respect. No casualties occurred even with the little pottery animals (a calf and donkey) which a four-year-old with definite destructive leanings begged to take home. He took them home helping to wrap them in a box (of which we made quite a ceremony), and returned them intact the following day with a china dog of his mother's.

Several of the children asked for different objects when they were put away in exchange for others. Literature, poetry, science and general friendliness were often-times encouraged through an informal intimacy with art objects.

Studio Activities

We had a large sunny room for a studio with an outlook of sky and fields which contained a variety of art media suitable for little children. The room was arranged functionally to provide for several small homogenous working groups.

The unity of one working group was always protected from outside stimulation or interference of other children, and adult visitors were not encouraged. The children came to the studio for creative adventures. If they wished to do something entirely different like block building or feeding their animals in the miniature barn, they went into one of the two other rooms. In

general, a long and fairly sustained period for studio experiences was planned. Although they started individually or in groups of two or three interested in the same thing, the experiences gradually spread to the others. The children were encouraged to explore fully the possibilities of the medium in which they were working.

We found that it was desirable for one group of children to have two consecutive days of uninterrupted experiences in painting, modeling, dancing and music, so one group was selected to come to the studio the first part of the morning for two consecutive days. After this group had completed its activities and had had its fruit juice, it went outdoors for the remainder of the morning or to the big playroom downstairs. Then, the other group that had been either outdoors or in the big playroom for the first part of the morning on these two days came upstairs for the latter part of the morning to listen to music, sing, hear stories, enjoy art objects or engage in other quiet projects.

The painting corner in the studio consisted of two long tables, an easel, a rich variety of colors in poster paints, finger paints, crayons, brushes of various sizes, and cupboards for paints and paper. There were two low open cupboards, one arranged with all the finger painting materials and the other with the poster paint equipment. The whole process from selecting paints and carrying water to putting away and cleaning up was organized and accessible to the children. They were free to paint at long kindergarten tables, at the easel, on the floor, at a screen, and sometimes on a wall mural which we arranged for them. They enjoyed having a number of painting situations available.

We found that it was important to furnish the best possible quality of painting materials. We used a fine quality of smooth white paper for poster painting superior to the unprinted newspaper often

used. We provided a great variety of poster paints mixing additional colors from the ones purchased, using in all about twenty-three colors. We found that little children like a wide variety of colors, unusual and subtle ones.

The finger paints were available in jelly jars in wooden boxes with a cloth and sticks for each set. We found it desirable to have individual finger paint sets for each child. We encouraged the children to be very responsible in all their painting procedures, believing that young children are almost as much interested in the cleaning procedure as in the actual painting.

We tried to cultivate an art vocabulary, a vocabulary that was distinctive and related to the work of the children. We tried always to be near-by for children often-times want a sympathetic audience and need to be encouraged. It was our experience that the child is a natural artist, and that his efforts often display elements of genuine creative ability. Sometimes these results are apparent accidents; sometimes they are deliberate.

Josephine, four, was so absorbed in her first painting that she painted three distinctive though related designs in a series and then said, "Now I am going to make a very, very different one." The group of four pictures revealed a sense of definite form. Eleanor, four, in finger painting with an early effort toward symbolic representation said, "Now I am going to make a speck of moonlight."

We preserved all the children's paintings in separate portfolios encouraging the parents likewise to take care of them when they left the school. We feel that this attitude of cherishing the pictures had much to do with the children's interest.

Occasionally brushes were used in other ways than for pictures. Our groups painted paper bowls and plates, parchment bowls, wooden bowls of various sizes, bread boards, cardboard waste baskets, and small

cardboard letter holders. They used both poster and finger paints and achieved some excellent results.

Two different years two groups wanted to make curtains out of colored crepe paper for the windows in our small block room. It was necessary for the teacher to help them measure the windows but the children selected the colors they wished and pasted the paper together. When the curtains were completed they were a very gay and attractive background for the block room, each panel being a different color with contrasting ones on top.

There were tables for clay work near the painting corner in the studio, with clay available in large pottery crocks. We permitted the children to take out large quantities of clay so that they might readily develop a feeling for handling it. As we tried to help them keep a sense of each medium separate, we did not encourage them to paint their clay objects. We did preserve all the significant results, and encouraged the young sculptor in as painstaking a manner as we did his painting neighbor.

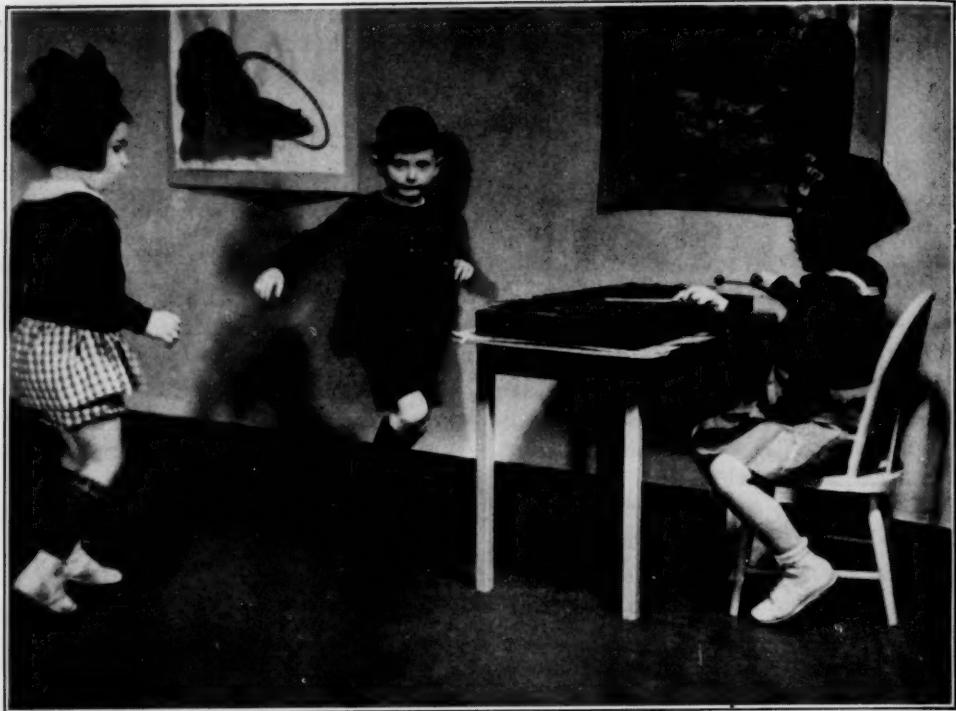
Most of our children delighted in the feeling of clay and oftentimes described their compositions in detail. Howard, three, in a dramatic clay composition with verticals and diagonals, said, "This is lightning coming out of the ground, and it is frightening the horses."

The Music Corner

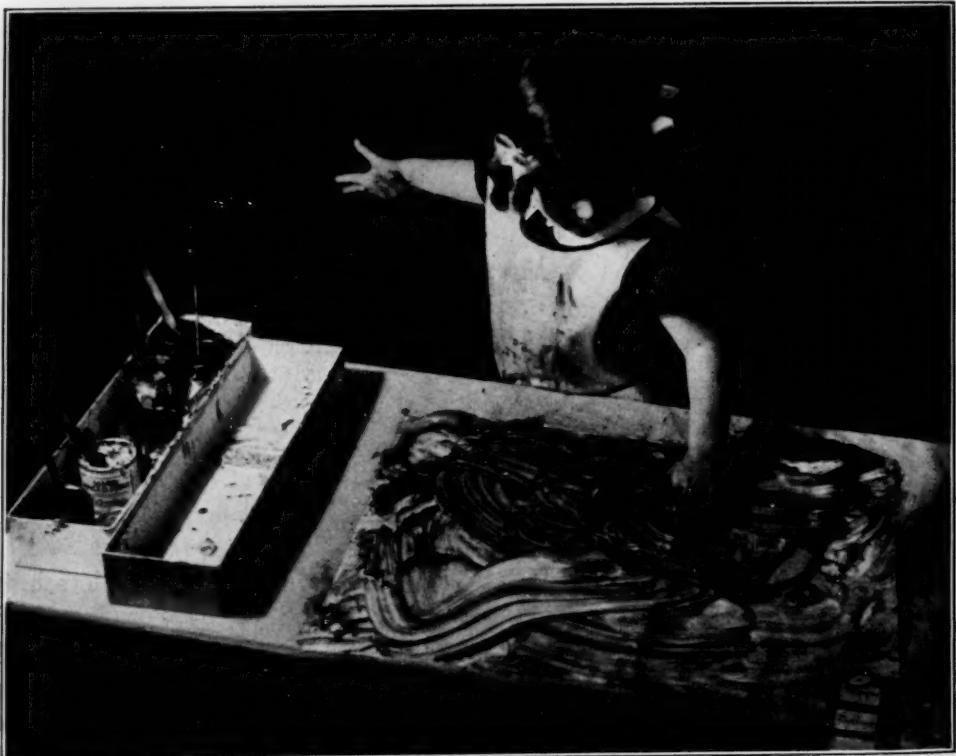
The music corner in the studio contained the chromatic bells of an octave and a half on which the children composed their own tunes, a phonograph with records of fine musical quality with stickers to mark each child's favorites, a piano, and a Chinese drum.

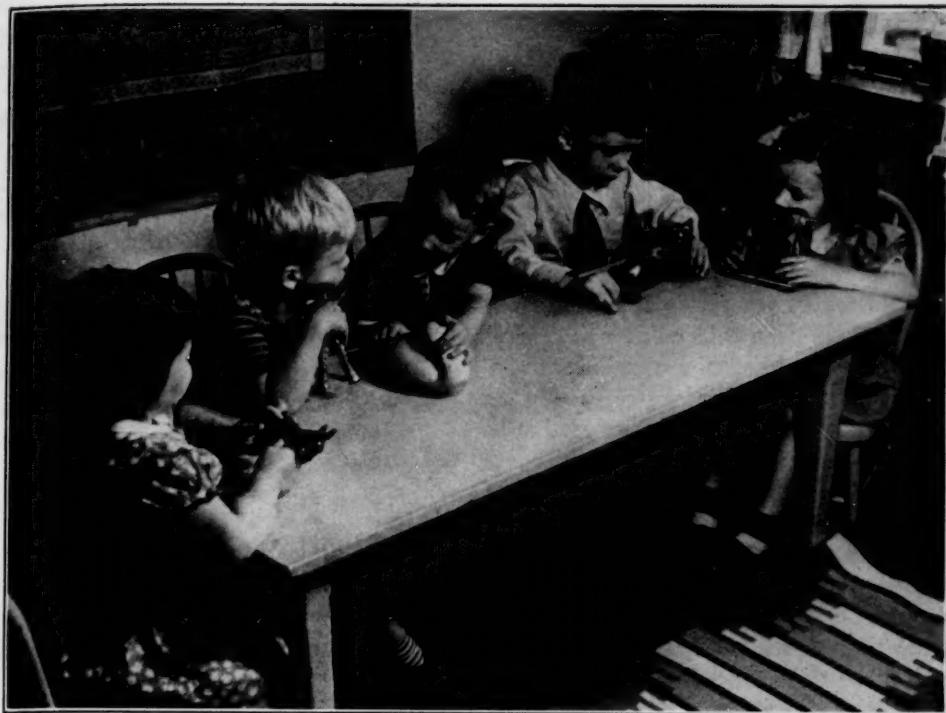
Danny's song, "I have a big bunch in a bouquet" (geege-eeee), originated the first day in the meadow, was later played on the bells. He orchestrated it by repeat-

An Environment . . .



Photographs by Van Fisher





... for Creative Experiences



ing it on the table and then on a drum. Eleanor, three, composed a tune directly on the bells, and adopted Danny's orchestration by repeating it on the drum. Hugh's first musical effort was a dance accompaniment on the bells. The children's tunes were always preserved, and played back to them by the teacher and sometimes by certain children who had learned them. We recorded the tunes on note-paper in colored crayon the children selected.

We introduced listening music for short periods giving the children only one or two records in the beginning, gradually increasing the number until they had a repertoire of familiar and cherished pieces. We encouraged them from the beginning to play the phonograph and spent much time showing them how to wind it and change the needle and records. It was quite a revelation to see the skill a number of the children developed in playing it. Several of them often played records for long periods while others painted or crayoned.

The records were kept in heavy individual paper folders so that the children might handle them easily and put stickers on the ones they preferred. Pasting stickers on these folders proved an admirable way of identifying favorite records.

Space was reserved for dancing and a row of chairs for an audience of children to watch their friends dance or on occasion a skilled dancer. The dancers chose their own costumes for each completed dance from materials of rich color and texture made up in plain squares, triangles, circular capes and collars.

A child may make up a dance all unconsciously on the lawn; others may need a little stimulus. Sometimes a simple birthday celebration with a few costumes is successful in providing the stimulus. Our children's first dances occurred on just such an occasion on the tennis court without any musical accompaniment. Later accompaniments composed on the bells were

preserved and played back. It was our endeavor to develop and cherish these dance patterns so that the children would have a repertoire of their own dances and tunes to enjoy and remember.

Eleanor and Danny each danced with a strongly marked style in their first dance. Hugh, four, composed one of his first dances indoors without the stimulus of music saying, "Now I want this to be a very slow dance." He carried it out in a beautifully sustained movement in a slow majestic tempo, and composed his own accompaniment. Cornelia, three, made a delicate, dainty almost lullaby-like dance and composed a tune on the bells in perfect accord with it.

Each child in our group who worked with clay or painted or danced or shared in music obviously benefited by his experiences. Each child gained in poise and security. In one nursery school group destructiveness in two children, marked lack of concentration in several, withdrawal tendencies in others, hair pulling in one, stubborn resistance in another responded directly with obvious release of tension to these experiences. In some cases stubbornness and resistance vanished entirely.

This individual technique offers new possibilities of individual adjustment within a group which the over-socialization of some nursery school philosophy tends to neglect. It is particularly fruitful with shy children who are oftentimes overwhelmed by the more aggressive members of any normal group.

A child need not use all of the media offered but will usually find a congenial one which will in time play the same role in his life that art plays in the life of the adult who has found a satisfactory hobby. The child who is thus treated as an individual and encouraged to develop all his faculties in the world of art has another set of tools or skills to help him adjust more happily to his environment.

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Time to Grow in a Child Environment

"I haven't time" has become a social anathema, a pattern thing which adults are inflicting upon the children as well. Miss Mensing, teacher of kindergarten at the University School, University of Indiana, states that "the most important contribution the kindergarten can make at the present time to the guidance of four- and five-year-old children is time to grow in a child environment." She pleads that we study the real needs of our four- and five-year-olds in the light of changing environments they face today.

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY in its new University Laboratory School has for the past two years been experimenting with an all-day kindergarten. The size of the group is limited to twenty-five children. Chronologically they range from four years nine months to six years in age. The children arrive at school shortly after 8:15 and return to their homes at 11:00. At 1:30 they are again back at school with the school day over at 3:00. It was hoped at first that the child's noon meal could be cared for at the school, but facilities were considered inadequate. However, nutrition and eating problems, if any, are met in joint cooperation by the parent and teacher in the home.

The kindergarten room is a large, sunny room, colorful and attractive in its architectural make-up. Off the room is a laboratory with adequate toilet and washing facilities and individual cupboards for children's wraps, overalls, aprons, rugs,

blankets and other personal belongings. A cement play court gives opportunity for an abundance of outdoor play and work.

The children in the beginning of the school year are scheduled to arrive on various dates from three days to a week apart so that adjustments may be made naturally in a small group. This schedule makes it possible for the teacher to study intensively the needs of individual children and to become more fully acquainted with parents and the home life of the child.

Opportunity for afternoon napping is not given by the school although long relaxing periods on heavy mats (fifteen to twenty minutes) with the children covered with blankets are provided. If a child sleeps at this time, he is not disturbed. Fatigue as a negative element of nervous energy is strictly guarded against and, when necessary especially with immature, tense or "tired" children, napping is cared for in the home between 11:00 and 1:30. In the beginning of the school year naps are advised for all of the children.

There is one teacher in charge of the group with no definite assistance.

The All-day Program

The nursery school has from its beginning sponsored an all-day period. The school for the child of five or four, however, is in many cities and towns, a matter of two or two and one-half hours a day. Into this time are crowded experiences with work and play materials (wood, clay, paints, crayons, blocks, paper, housekeeping materials, etc.); music; literature; a

milk or lunch period; games and physical activities; toilet and rest periods; and perhaps even an excursion to a neighboring place of interest. A program set up to allow for all or nearly all of these activities, in the time mentioned above, is indeed a hazard to the calm and natural growth of early childhood.

Therefore, at the opening of the University School two years ago, it was decided to try longer hours for the five-year-old group. At the same time, the staff was eager to study kindergarten practice as carried out in many of our best public school systems and if possible to coordinate the two practices. That is, could we learn anything from our experiment that would help in the general scheme of kindergarten education? In our set-up of longer hours, could we study each individual child more intensively and find out anything concerning child guidance at the five-year-old age level?

We decided, first of all, to have no definite daily program. A tentative program would be on hand, but at no time would it be considered necessary to hold to it. However, as time went on, it was found that a certain routine is important and that children of this age expect it; in fact, a general knowledge of what is next adds to their feeling of security and belongingness. Thus evolved an indoor or outdoor work and play time in the beginning of each morning and an outdoor play time or excursion at the end of the period.

A lunch of orange juice or tomato juice and a cracker fell naturally in the middle of the morning session at about 9:45. Relaxation, the children seemed to feel, came logically next in order. On the first day of school, one child brought an especially attractive red and white heavy bathroom mat on which to relax. He had shown it proudly to the teacher and other children on his arrival. Finishing his glass of orange

juice, he looked questioningly at the teacher. "Now is the time?" he asked. And so the routine of eat your lunch, put your glass on the tray, your napkin in the basket and get your mat was begun.

Meetings in small groups to talk over plans of work and to tell of experiences, literature periods, and music came at any time during the day. These activities did not, it was felt, fall into any routine pattern. Therefore, stories are read and told often two and three times during a day. With more and more handling of books and reading of stories and poems, the more intense grows the love of literature and a realization of the value of the printed page in the giving of information.

The Place of Music in the All-day Program

Music as a group situation is often omitted for days at a time. This omission is not due to any dislike of music. In fact the children respond keenly to it and, at the close of last year, showed the usual attainments of kindergarten children in enjoyment of and ability to interpret music in rhythms, in the singing of songs, original and otherwise, in appreciation of music, and in experimentation with percussion and tone instruments.

The omission of music periods at times is rather due to a feeling on the teacher's part that children of this age level do not consider group music experiences a vital part of their daily lives, nor do they need, for full growth, such daily experiences. This conclusion was arrived at even with musically gifted children in the group.

Music is a stimulation. At its best, it is the result of a mood. The children one day were looking at many picture books of boats. The sea and waves were talked about. "Play 'Sailing,'" whispered a small boy to the teacher. Then to the rolling tune of the old folk song, many of the

children played waves, and boats, and captains gazing through their spyglasses.

At another time a turtle had become a pet of the kindergarten. The children had watched it and talked about its living habits and the teacher had read again and again, at the demand of the children, Vachel Lindsay's "The Little Turtle". Then a merry brown-eyed boy said, "Please play some music that sounds like a turtle walking." And so the teacher played some slow, ponderous music in four-fourths time and the children imagined and reacted the lifting of the turtle's clumsy legs as he walked about seeking food or a new home.

The Importance of Uninterrupted Work-and-Play Periods

Long, absorbed, happy periods of concentrated work and play have become the basic working goal in our kindergarten from which guidance of child life radiates. Long, absorbed, happy periods that will give to the child opportunity to try out, to feel, to think and to judge and thus to grow in stability and independence to higher and higher levels of development.

We tend in this age to hurry and to interrupt children too much. Hurry and interruption are evident in the home and in the school. They lead to tenseness, frustration and a general nervousness. Children need time to complete tasks, to feel the sense of individual accomplishment, to feel satisfaction in the progress of their daily lives.

Four little girls were playing at house-keeping. They were invited by a group of boys to take a ride in a newly built airplane. They cleaned the house, swept, dusted, made the doll beds, packed the suitcases and then went to the "airport". The "plane" was waiting for them. After having purchased tickets, they boarded the "plane" and, in play, rose in the clouds and drifted away.

For fifteen minutes, feeling no rush

for time, they stayed in the "plane" and let the boys in imagination carry them to other surroundings. Then as the "plane came to the ground", they lighted and went to visit friends. Soon they were back again at the "airport". "We want to go home, now," they informed the boys. And so, away they went back to their home, opened up the house, cooked a dinner, washed the dolls and put them to bed.

The whole play took almost one and one half hours. It was absorbing, and thoughtful. To have interrupted it would have made for confusion and rush at another time. Children need time to plan, to work, to absorb.

And so it has been felt that the most important contribution the kindergarten can make at the present time to the guidance of four- and five-year-old children is time to grow in a child environment, sometimes with playmates and sometimes alone as individual absorption is desired.

If the time allotted to a kindergarten session is short, time to grow can still be provided. Minimizing the time spent on non-essentials would be necessary. A time to work with materials, to accomplish with his hands, to play dramatically the life round about him are essential to a child and are necessary to his growth. Stories and books depicting his surroundings, vitalizing and broadening his experiences are also essential. A rest period is necessary to his health and a lunch period is not to be spurned. Group music periods, games and such are experiences every child should have, but as a daily routine they may be classed as non-essentials.

Let's prolong our periods of absorption in work and play, periods that the child approaches unhurriedly and with confidence that he will have time to finish. Let us have restful periods so that children may develop toward happy, stable, purposeful lives.

*Education in
The Lay Press*

• WILLIAM G. CARR of the Educational Policies Commission said in his article published in the November issue of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: "We must face facts. Large numbers of the American people are indifferent to the schools. Many others are profoundly ignorant of what a good modern school is like. If you don't believe it, take a look at some of the recent magazines . . ."

The latest of numerous articles lashing out bitterly at America's public schools appears as the feature article in the December, 1940, issue of *Country Gentleman*. Margaret Jackson, the author, has this to say about teachers and education in general:

"Our teachers are not only prepared for their professions at the public expense, but they are better paid than school teachers anywhere else in the world. They are surrounded by pension laws, tenure laws, teachers' federations, and a powerful lobby in every state legislature. They feel entitled to and have attained greater economic security than any other professional group.

"Why do our children, as bright a bunch as ever went to school, fail to learn to spell and write the language?" Mrs. Jackson gives three reasons: the misapplication of the theories of progressive education to the whole mass of children in the public schools, the increasing use of printed forms such as true-false examinations and workbooks, and the "flash-card" system of teaching reading.

"In all of these reasons there is one obvious complaint against the teacher, and that is that she has become not a little spoiled and lazy. . . . Teacher wants to be through at three o'clock. She doesn't want to work on Saturdays. In many states she is under tenure and you can't fire her anyhow, unless she commits a murder.

"We are paying more every year for public education—and getting less education for the money. There seem to be certain definite reasons for the persistent and alarming lowering of the standards of education all over the country.

"The idea of free 'larning' for every child in the nation was, and still is, one of the biggest ideas a country ever had. With our usual exuberance, we have not been content with free schooling up until the age of fourteen and scholarships for only exceptional children after that. No, we have gone at it all the way, and with

Across the

our customary extravagance and zest have thrown in university education, specialized training, 'opportunity classes' for subnormal children, consolidated schools for rural children and everything else we could think of."

Dr. Carr continues: "Spurred on by the findings of research and by the changing needs of this day and generation, the teaching profession has been busily remaking the schools within the past twenty years, particularly the elementary schools. The public, meanwhile, is often utterly confused by these changes, and not understanding, is apathetic, resentful, or even antagonistic . . . We must work hard at building up favorable public attitudes toward education and at breaking down bad ones already established . . . If we do not broaden educational opportunities beyond our schools we may soon find that a misinformed and misguided public will narrow the educational opportunities within our schools."

That education is receiving unusual attention in the lay press is evidenced by the twenty-five articles listed under education and childhood in the *Readers Digest Index* for July-December 1940. It is more important than ever before that our first line of defense—the parents of the children we teach—know what we are doing and why. Better yet, they should be so much a part of the planning and doing that interpretation to them is unnecessary.

What People Think About Youth and Education, a bulletin published in November by the Research Division of the National Education Association from facts collected by the American Institute of Public Opinion and sponsored by the American Youth Commission, is recommended reading for all teachers.

*School
Visiting*

• THE PARKSIDE Primary School in Montgomery County, Maryland, sits upon a heavily wooded hill. On the south side of the building is the space where construction work, ordinarily a classroom activity, is done outdoors in the sunshine and fresh air. Inside are four classrooms with toilet and washing

the Editor's Desk

facilities between each two of them. The rooms are delightfully decorated in bright fresh colors, with large circular tables at which the children work. The entrance hall is really a huge workroom into which the four classrooms open with large sliding doors. Each classroom has its own outside exit directly to the playground. The middle grade school is across the road and on the top of an adjoining hill.

The physical setting of the school was most enjoyable but the most important part of the morning's visit was the superintendent's interpretation of the philosophy of education back of the very happy, practical program we saw in progress. He spoke of communicating with parents rather than reporting; he emphasized the importance of rating as prospective rather than retrospective; he gave examples of real community living where parents, teachers and children worked together on common interests; he replied that size of class was the wrong approach—that the number of children in a group should be determined by the kind of program and the physical possibilities of the school environment; he talked about the infinite possibilities for growth inherent in every child and how we needed to know so much more about children in order to know what these possibilities are. He described how sixty teachers met together in a summer workshop to plan the coming year's curriculum. When we asked him if the teachers came to the workshop voluntarily, or whether they were chosen, or whether they received credit for their six weeks of work, he looked puzzled and replied, "Why I guess they came voluntarily. I never thought about it for they all seemed to have such a good time and nobody checked up on them or told them to come. No, they didn't receive any credit that I know of."

On the editor's desk are several of the Montgomery County bulletins which describe the courses of study, the procedures, and give data concerning the schools. The foreword to one of them says: "The life and program of the school are being thought of as a way of meeting problematical situations in which values exist for each pupil in his stage of development. Such

a plan calls for continuous planning on the part of the school and on the part of the pupil who is given the opportunity to act on his own proposal and acceptance. It is clear and literally true that one reacts to his own reactions—not to what was said, but to what one takes was said; not to the blow itself, but to the way one takes the blow . . . These bulletins are presented in the fervent hope that they may help democratically and professionally in enlarging the school experiences of children."

We believe that they will help, but primarily because the superintendent and his supervisory staff work with and for the children and teachers.

Publications Received

THREE RECENTLY published pamphlets on the relationships between education and defense: *Education and the Defense of American Democracy*. The second of a series of reports issued by the Educational Policies Commission. Outlines a comprehensive proposal for energizing the American schools in the present crisis. Is accompanied with a four-page leaflet of suggestions for local community organization. Single copies, ten cents. Order from National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street N.W., Washington, D. C. *Education and the National Defense*. A statement by the American Council on Education, prepared in connection with a study of international events conducted for a number of months. *Youth, Defense, and the National Welfare*. Recommendations adopted by the American Youth Commission at a special session on July 22, 1940. Contains specific conclusions in connection with legislation for compulsory military service. Copies are free. Order from Council at 744 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D. C.

Building the Curriculum in the Primary Grades. A one hundred two page mimeographed bulletin prepared by the teachers and supervisors of Connecticut Rural Supervisory District VI for the purpose of describing their everyday experiences with children in the hope that better understanding of children may result and that other teachers may find helpful suggestions. Three of the nine sections have to do with Children's Experiences in Social Studies, and Children's Experiences in Science, and Meaningful Experiences in Number. Florence Battle and Martin B. Robertson, Willimantic, Connecticut, are the supervisors for this district.

Housing America, a source unit for the social studies, published by The National Council for the Social Studies, 1201 Sixteenth Street N.W., Washington, D. C. Harold F. Clark, professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, is quoted thus in the bulletin: "The problem of housing is far more important than most of the material taught in the present school curriculum. A comprehensive program of considering the housing of all the people should be introduced into all the schools and should be studied from the kindergarten through the junior college." The price of the bulletin is fifty cents.

How to Start Publicity for Nursery Education in Your Community is a pamphlet published by the National Association for Nursery Education prepared by Dorothy Baruch, Evangeline Burgess and Dorothy Jones. Its purpose is to promote nursery education and it is "addressed to those who are already acquainted with the nursery education movement and who are eager to see education for young children become a part of the regular school system in this country." It outlines various channels for publicity, including radio, a speakers' bureau, movies, and exhibits. It may be obtained from West 514 East Hall, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, for twenty-five cents.

Kindergarten-Pri- TWO RECENT COPIES of *mary Teachers Work Together* the Minneapolis Public Schools Bulletin sent to us by Bernice Newell, supervisor of instruction, describe interest groups formed by kindergarten and primary teachers for the purpose of professional growth. We shall watch with interest the results and shall report to you later some of the significant things this group accomplishes.

Errata

FROM THE LIST of educational magazines cooperating with CHILDHOOD EDUCATION by supplying two exchange copies each month the name of *The National Parent-Teacher* was omitted when this list was published in the September issue. We regret the omission but are glad of this opportunity to call attention to the excellent material *The National Parent-Teacher* contains, reviews of which frequently appear in CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

Many of you enjoyed the song, "Pat-a-Pan" published in the December, 1940, issue in the article, "The Christmas Story in Music," by Augustus Zanzig. Credit should have been given to the National Recreation Association as the publisher of this song. We regret this omission and hope that you will make note of it.

The A. C. E. Convention

Final program plans for the Association for Childhood Education convention which is to be held at Oakland, California, July 8-12, 1941, were made during the meeting of the Executive Board at Washington, in November. We are glad to announce that Dr. Amelia Rinehardt, president of Mills College, is to be the speaker at the dinner meeting which is to be held on Friday night, July 12th. "Early California" will be the social theme, interpreted by singing groups and dancers.

Elizabeth Neterer of Seattle, Washington, is to be the director of the studio groups with Dorothea Jackson of Seattle as her assistant. Two articles in this issue of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION describe some of the activities of past studios, but participation in them is essential

to appreciate them fully. Several unique features are planned for this year's groups by Miss Neterer and Miss Jackson.

An all day excursion to San Jose for the purpose of school visiting has been planned for Monday, July 7th. Other trips are scheduled for Thursday afternoon, followed in the evening by the California Night celebration. An added feature of this year's program will be the Friday afternoon seminar meeting on "Current Events in Education" at which outstanding research studies of importance to teachers of young children will be reported, interpreted and evaluated.

It is important that you make your reservations early. Hotel Oakland is convention headquarters.

Book . . .

REVIEWS

CHILDREN AND THE THEATER. By Caroline E. Fisher and Hazel Glaister Robertson, Stanford University, California; Stanford University Press, 1940. Pp. 191. \$3.00.

Dramatics is an accepted activity in our schoolrooms. Children love to act and will work industriously on all the details associated with a production. Skillful teachers know that this interest and driving power can be used to pull a considerable load of information; that transmuting this information into drama endows it with vitality and pushes its possessor far beyond lip-knowledge; and that situations arising in connection with dramatic work can be turned to the uses of social and personal education even more effectively than in most other enterprises where contributions are varied, labor interdependent, and the common goal important and all-absorbing.

For the teacher who wishes to improve her dramatic performances on any side and bring them up to the level of her group's abilities, *Children and the Theater* is an invaluable guide. Its authors take play production as seriously as the school does geography. They give instructions on designing, lighting, construction of scenery, make-up, costume, properties and directing which are as sound, ingenious and discriminating as they are simple and understandable. At the same time these authors have the standards of genuinely progressive teachers, not only for the part dramatics can play in education, but also for the larger education of the individual which includes dramatics as one of its tools. Their faithfulness to the educator, even when it hampers the producer, is evidenced in many a passage.

Mrs. Robertson and Miss Fisher make no pretense of helping the classroom teacher shape subject matter drawn from her own curriculum into dramatic episodes. The book gains rather than loses for the teacher by being written from the center of a theater for school children, rather than from a schoolroom turned theater.

There is another smaller group for which *Children and the Theater* is as specifically useful. These are the workers who, like the authors,

set up a children's theater and must work satisfactorily with boards, committees and agencies; handle budgets, publicity and volunteers, and make their ventures fit into community patterns. This group will be especially interested in the sections describing the authors' own project in carrying on a children's community theater in ways good for the box-office, and also for the children on both sides of the footlights, and in descriptions of similar projects elsewhere.

The usefulness of the book is increased by a glossary of stage terms, a bibliography and index, and photographs which are attractive.

All this is to say that no one can afford to miss *Children and the Theater* who is interested in giving one of the oldest of the arts and the one to which children most naturally and willingly give their allegiance, its place in their lives both as art and as education.—Charlotte Perry, Director of Dramatics, Rosemary Junior School, Greenwich, Connecticut.

THE ARTS IN THE CLASSROOM. By Natalie Robinson Cole. New York: The John Day Company, 1940. Pp. 137. \$1.75.

Mrs. Cole's book, *The Arts in the Classroom*, should be a source of inspiration and help to all teachers whether specialists in the arts or classroom teachers. It is written with a deep understanding of the child and is pervaded throughout with a wholesome philosophy of living for all.

The author stresses the feeling side of art expression, leading to the more intellectual and urges constantly the importance of sincere, natural and fearless expression of one's self. A positive approach is Mrs. Cole's way of working, full of encouragement, praise and faith in the creative ability of each personality. These qualities are uppermost in her relationships with children, and one sees how important they are in releasing the creative flow.

Mrs. Cole has the rare gift of being able to take the reader with her into the classroom experiences and to show him how she lives and creates with the children. No adult standards are allowed to block the creative path. The

teacher is alert to catch the "lead," to give wise guidance, to furnish the necessary materials and suggestions, and to help the child to see and to use with imagination the world around him—his world.

Practical help is to be found throughout the book, help in the actual materials, techniques and procedures used in given situations. The many charming and enlightening conversations, the sincerely artistic illustrations give the reader a rare insight into how these art experiences came into being and how they were developed.

Painting, clay work, design, block printing, creative writing and rhythmic dancing, all find their place in Mrs. Cole's discussion of the arts. To this reviewer, the chapter on the rhythmic dance was tantalizing for she longed for more about music—the singing side of music particularly—for singing is so close to the "center" of the child about which Mrs. Cole speaks. But one realizes that in one book, it is impossible to cover the entire range of art experiences and what Mrs. Cole says of any specific art may be applied to others, especially to that all inclusive art—the art of living.—*Beth Neal Osbourne, Horace Mann School, Teachers College New York City.*

TEACHING READING TO SLOW-LEARNING CHILDREN. By Samuel A. Kirk, with an introduction by Marion Monroe. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940. Pp. 225. \$1.50.

The teacher who yearly faces the problems presented by the slow-learning pupil will welcome this volume by Dr. Kirk who writes with a rich background of experience in the field and who substantiates his practice with sound theory and a knowledge of the recent research concerning the problems of the mentally retarded pupil.

Dr. Kirk answers such commonly asked questions as: (1) What is the incidence of mental retardation? (2) How are mentally retarded children different from children of normal mentality? (3) What are the possibilities for these children in learning to read? (4) Shall the time of beginning reading be delayed for them? (5) How shall instructional procedures for sub-normal pupils differ from those for normal pupils? (6) What various methods have proved successful with them? (7) How far can

we expect the slow learners to progress in reading? (8) What difficulties are most severe in the reading of slow-learners? (9) How shall they be cared for in our schools as to various means of classification or segregation for instructional purposes? (10) What can be done about the large group of dull-normal pupils who reach our high schools and then become failures there?

The book is very readable for the beginning teacher as well as the experienced teacher. The most difficult of the concepts presented are given in simple and clear statements.

The Appendices include additional bibliographical material for the teacher, as well as lists of books and standardized reading tests which can be used with slow-learners.

The book will be useful to many teachers, but it is particularly recommended for the classroom teacher's and supervisor's libraries, professional school libraries, and as a text or collateral reading in classes for teachers who are studying the problems of instruction in reading for the normal as well as sub-normal pupil.—*M. Lucile Harrison, Colorado State College of Education.*

TEACHERS FOR DEMOCRACY: THE FOURTH YEARBOOK, JOHN DEWEY SOCIETY. Edited by George E. Axtelle and William W. Wattenberg. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940. Pp. 412. \$2.50.

This timely yearbook, like others of the John Dewey Society, represents the work of several different writers each of whom, in this case, "makes his contribution to the development of a general point of view with which all are in agreement." (p. V.) This general point of view includes such fundamental propositions as "the necessity for preserving democracy by means of an appropriate form of education, the need for deeper understanding of the important forces influencing American life and education, the essential necessity of a close relation of education to community life, and the assumption that the entire life and program of an institution is the potent influence in determining the values and actions of its graduates." p. VI.)

This stimulating book will be widely read, doubtless, not only by those engaged in teacher education but by students preparing for teaching.—A. T.

Books... FOR CHILDREN

PRESENTS FOR LUPE. By Dorothy Lathrop. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1940. Unpaged. \$2.00.

Picture books by Dorothy Lathrop have a kind of breath-taking beauty that we somehow never get used to and never tire of pouring over year after year. *Presents For Lupe* is in color; tawny browns and orange, that are soft and lovely but never blur the lines that give vigor and movement to the pictures.

Lupe is a South American squirrel. Two children buy her from a pet shop and try to dispel her strange melancholy. They give her a big cage in which she can really run. They bring her little gifts daily—nuts, fruits, pottery—all from South America. Still Lupe looks sad. Not until she tears the cornstalk doll to pieces and begins stuffing the remains into an empty gourd do they discover what is the matter. Lupe wanted a home, a bed, a secret hiding place for her treasures; in short, Lupe wanted privacy.

The suggestion of fierce, swift action in these pictures is unbelievably fine and Lupe looks enough like our fox squirrels to seem familiar. Here is a picture book to treasure.

JIMMY AND JEMIMA. By Helen Sewell. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1940. Unpaged. \$1.00.

To remember Helen Sewell's strong and tender woodcuts for *The First Bible* and *A Round of Carols* (Oxford University Press) is to view with amazement the hilarious drawings that tell the story of Jimmy and his much-too-smart little sister, Jemima. Here is a comic strip at its cleverest, the pictures heightening the humor of, "pride goeth before a fall."

Jemima was a beautiful baby and a sweet child but after she began out-doing Jimmy, the Boy Scout, she was a plain pest. Jimmy bore up fairly well but his chagrin increased with Jemima's unbearable accomplishments. How she falls and Jimmy rises to undreamed heights is a satisfying conclusion, even for Jemima.

THE SILVER DOLLAR. Lithographs by Barbara Latham. Story by Sebring Lourey. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940. Unpaged.

To look at this big book is to be reminded that our bookish eyes and vocabularies are chiefly adjusted to the flora and fauna, the aspirations and activities of the East or near-East. But here we encounter armadillos, prickly pears, round-ups, vaqueros and a small boy who yearns more than anything in the world to be a completely equipped cow-man. Alas! He loses his silver dollar, but to compensate for this major tragedy, the cowboys take him with them on a real round-up. How he proves himself a true cow-hand and wins his outfit—a Stetson hat, brush jacket, leather chaps, spurs, red bandana and even the grand high heeled boots—is amusingly told with vigorous pictures and simple text.

Boys 5 to 9 will like this book in any part of the country, and so will their sisters. It is enough to start a juvenile trek to the slogan, "Go West, young man, go West!"

THE RACE. By Clement Hurd. New York: Random House, 1940. Unpaged. \$1.50.

Here is a rarely amusing picture-story for children 3 to 6. So completely do the pictures tell the tale that in two readings the four-year-old will be telling it for himself. The race between the monkey and the duck carries you through towns and country with exciting adventures and a growing suspense. This reviewer found herself turning the pages with increasing eagerness and a steadily expanding grin. Fun for our youngest is hard to find in books, but here it is, in good measure.

A COUNTRY A B C. Clarke Hutton. New York: Oxford University Press, 1940. Unpaged. \$2.00.

This follows the usual ABC formula of isolated objects, without continuity, but the clear, clean colors, the lovely greens, blues and pinks that predominate make it a beautiful book to look at. The pictures transport us to the countryside and are like a breath of fresh air.

Among . . . THE MAGAZINES

EVALUATING THE MODERN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAM. By Howard A. Lane. *Educational Trends*, September-October 1940, 8:8-12.

When Mr. Lane looks for significant observable characteristics of a school he holds as his standard the purpose of providing continually improving but always wholesome living for individuals, and asks himself such questions as, Is this school a good place for children to spend their days? Does the children's conversation indicate that their experiences are zestful and worthwhile? Does each child find a satisfying place for himself so he is not conspicuous as a "problem"? Do the children show self-management and normal activity when free from the control of the teacher? Do teachers, janitors, and administrators regard children as personalities with equal rights and privileges? Does the work of the classroom interpret the locality and contemporaneous times? Do children and patrons say "we" rather than "they" when they mention the school?

UNGURESSED GIFTS. By Hughes Mearns. *National Parent-Teacher*. December 1940, 35:30-32.

Investigation shows that although men and women who have become successful have usually found their way alone, every now and then there has been a creative adult, not infrequently an elementary school teacher, who has had the heart to discern an individual's possibilities.

Mr. Mearns describes these creative adults as people who subject all conventional conclusions to the scrutiny of individual judgment, who have courage to admit that a rebel is sometimes more intelligent than a slave, and who recognize and nurture such priceless gifts as courtesy concealed in clumsiness, and reticence when speech might hurt. They not only entice these gifts to expression again and again, but protect them from social condemnation by those who fail to recognize and understand them.

CHILDREN IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL. By Beryl Parker. *The National Elementary Principal*, December 1940, 20:71-73.

Responses of teachers to inquiries made at intervals during the past ten years indicate that they feel young people 9-13 years of age lack educational opportunities provided primary and adolescent children. Since the psychology of later childhood has not been extensively explored by research workers the curriculum does not pay adequate attention to the special characteristics of this age. Moreover, there is no major professional organization and no notable educational journal concentrating on this area to help the teachers.

Miss Parker describes how valiantly teachers have met the problem of making the last three years of the elementary school fruitful experiences, and points out some of the characteristics of children of this age often overlooked or not fully appreciated.

THE FUTURE OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA. By Karl W. Bigelow. *School and Society*, November 9, 1940, 52:441-446.

No aspect of the educational scene is commanding more attention than the education of teachers.

Mr. Bigelow sees in the future of teacher education a greater emphasis on social understanding and upon the knowledge of children; more attention to planned, significant, first-hand experiences and a more vital relationship between study and activity. Students will take a greater part in arranging and carrying out their own educational programs and there will be a closer sympathy between students and professors.

TEACHERS STUDY THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN. *Educational Method*, November 1940: 20:61-113.

This entire issue is devoted to articles which show different methods people have used when studying children in order to work more understandingly and effectively with them. It shows that one phase of personality, speech, for instance, is not isolated, but is intimately bound with other phases of behavior and experience. It gives teachers encouragement to attempt to study their own classroom problems.

Research... ABSTRACTS

CHILDREN'S GROWTH IN THE USE OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE. By Mata V. Bear. "The Elementary English Review," December 1939, 16: 312-319.

Early in September each child in twenty-four representative St. Louis public schools was asked to write a story about an interesting experience that took place during the summer vacation. The children were asked to choose their own subjects and to write without any limit as to length of story or length of time. Some 12,000 stories were thus secured and were analyzed to show development in language ability.

The median number of sentences used in writing the story by pupils in each of the first six grades was, respectively: 3.3, 5.3, 6.9, 8.1, 8.9, 9.7. In all grades girls used a slightly higher average number of sentences than boys. In every grade above the first, the range in number of sentences used was from one to twenty-three or more. The median number of simple sentences decreased from 88% in grade one to 79% in grade two, 68% in grade three, 45% in grade six, and 36% in grade eight. The proportion of compound sentences increased from 2% in grade four to 10% in grade eight. Six per cent of the sentences used by second graders were complex sentences. The proportion of such sentences in grade three was 12%; grade four, 16%; grade five, 21%, and grade six, 25%. The percentage of children who used one or more complex sentences in their stories was 6% in grade one, 21% in grade two, and 48% in grade three. The author finds that because of its extensive use in written composition, the complex sentence should receive careful consideration in teaching. She regards it as one of the basic factors in the growth of language usage.

In view of the oft-repeated criticism that children cannot write good sentences when they leave the elementary school, the number of incomplete sentences found in the collected stories was surprisingly small, decreasing from less than 8% in grade one to less than 2% in grades six, seven, and eight. Even in grade two

almost three-fourths of the children wrote no incomplete sentences. "Run-on" sentences appeared more frequently. One or more such sentences were written by 10% of the first graders, 25% of the second graders, 40% of the third graders, 60% of the fifth and sixth graders, and 50% of the eighth graders. Here, again, the author indicates the need for careful teaching. Analysis of the use of various types of sentences according to the mental ages of pupils shows a steady growth in language power with increasing mental maturity.

A STUDY OF THE LEISURE ACTIVITIES OF CERTAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF LONG ISLAND. By Lucile Allard. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education No. 779, 1939. 117 pp.

A study of the use of leisure time during a six months winter period by 486 elementary school teachers of Long Island was made through the use of a questionnaire. Forty-three activities were listed and the teachers were asked to check the frequency with which they engaged in these activities and their reasons for participation.

The following activities were reported as being engaged in once a week or more often by the largest number of teachers: (Percentages following each activity indicate the proportion of teachers checking the activity.) reading newspapers—99%, radio—93%, walking—75%, automobiling—61%, reading fiction—60%, visiting friends—58%, retiring early,—55%, reading non-fiction—51%, entertaining friends—39%, playing musical instrument—37%, movies—32%, professional courses—32%.

The author draws the following conclusions from her analysis of the teachers' responses: Leisure activities carried on most generally by Long Island teachers are very similar to those revealed by other studies of adult groups. The number of activities participated in frequently is relatively small. The most popular activities

are individual, indoor, quiet, and passive recreations. There is little evidence of physical activities, of group participation, and of creative effort. Only eight of the forty-three activities are engaged in frequently by half of the group. Less than one teacher in seven carries on any active recreational pursuit daily or weekly except walking, swimming, or visiting friends. The activities frequently carried on are quite inexpensive; those carried on seldom are more costly or require more skill.

The teachers were asked to check one of the following three reasons for their participation in various activities: *I enjoyed doing it, I thought I should, As an escape from strain.* The first reason, "I enjoy doing it," accounted for 82 per cent of all reasons given, "I thought I should" for 11 per cent, and the third reason for 7 per cent. The activities to which the largest number of teachers responded with the reason, "I enjoy doing it," were: entertaining and visiting friends, reading fiction and newspapers, radio, automobiling, witnessing professional stage plays, picnics, movies, concerts, dancing, and walking. The activities most popular as an "escape from strain" were: movies, resting, retiring early, individual games, automobiling, and radio. Those most frequently engaged in because individuals thought they "should" were retiring early, school parties or lectures, professional courses, resting, walking, and reading non-fiction.

The four major reasons for non-participa-

tion in certain activities were, with percentage of response: *did not learn and insufficient skill*, 40 per cent; *too much work*, 21 per cent; *too costly*, 17 per cent; *not available*, 15 per cent. The other reasons listed were checked by 3 per cent or less of the teachers and included: *no congenial company, parental disapproval in childhood, physical disability, fear of public disapproval, and religion forbids.*

Wide variation in individual patterns in the use of leisure leads the author to deny that there is a typical Long Island teacher. Analysis of leisure activities in relation to the place of resident revealed notable differences in only ten of the forty-three activities. Attendance at concerts, operas, museums, zoos, and similar activities were more common among the teachers who lived near New York City. Participation in amateur dramatics and singing were more common among those at the far end of Long Island. As teachers advanced in age, participation in dancing, swimming, skating, and other active forms of recreation decreased while resting and retiring early increased. Older teachers read less fiction and more non-fiction. The younger teachers played more bridge, took more cultural courses, and listened to the radio more than the older ones. The author concludes that this group of teachers might use leisure time more profitably if the school had developed interest and skill in more types of activities. She emphasizes the responsibility of the school to make such a contribution to the development of well-rounded personalities.

I Hear America Singing

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be, blithe and strong.
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in the boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the batter singing as he stands,
The woodcutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission, or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl singing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day that belongs to the day—

—Walt Whitman

News . . .

HERE AND THERE

New A.C.E. Branches

Albany Association for Childhood Education, California
Stockton Association for Childhood Education, California
Dearborn County Association for Childhood Education, Indiana
Clarendon Association for Childhood Education, Iowa
Fort Dodge Association for Childhood Education, Iowa
Eastern Oregon Association for Childhood Education
East Stroudsburg State Teachers College Association for Childhood Education, Pennsylvania

Lost Book

A dark green looseleaf book containing newspaper clippings of pictures and articles about kindergarten activities was lost at the A.C.E. convention at Milwaukee. The cover carried the title, "Seattle Kindergartens," in large letters. Will anyone having knowledge of this book please communicate with Dorothea Jackson, Board of Education, Seattle, Washington.

Annie J. Blanchard

For more than thirty years before her death Annie J. Blanchard worked in the public schools of Grand Rapids, Michigan. After teaching in the kindergarten and first grade she was appointed, in 1915, supervisor of kindergarten and the first two grades. Miss Blanchard died on November 12. Although she retired from active service in 1931 she is well remembered for her fine work with children and will be missed by those she helped and advised throughout her long career.

Changes

Bertha B. Schwable, from associate director to director of the Department of Kindergarten Education, State Teachers College, Winona, Minnesota.

Gretchen Wulfing, from director of elementary education at Redlands, California, to kindergarten-primary supervisor at Oakland, California.

Retirement

Lula Bradford of Birmingham, Alabama. Miss Bradford has been a member of the national Association for Childhood Education and the Birmingham A.C.E. for many years and expects to continue her activity in the local group.

News of Kindergartens

Sixty-two five-year-olds are enrolled in a newly established kindergarten at Camas, Washington. Rural children attend all day, others half days. Busses provide transportation.

The school district at Woodland, Washington, has a complete preschool program. There is a nursery school for the two- to four-year-olds and a kindergarten for those who are five.

Unusual Toy Exhibit

The Seattle branch of the American Association of University Women, cooperating with other local organizations and groups, sponsored a toy exhibit in the auditorium of a department store early in November. In the "Child's Garden of Toys" were displayed not only commercial products but homemade toys and those treasured by adults from their own childhood. Playground equipment and toys used at the five WPA nursery schools in Seattle were included in the exhibit.

Child Labor Day

For thirty-five years the last week end in January has been designated as Child Labor Day. Churches, schools, and organizations wishing to join in the observance on January 25, 26, or 27, may secure a helpful packet from the National Child Labor Committee, 419 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Price 25c.

Radio Programs

Many have listened with great interest to the tri-weekly series, "Children are People," which began December 3 over the Columbia network. The hour of the broadcast is 3:45 to 3:55 P. M., E.S.T. The speaker on January 13 will be Jessie Stanton, consulting director of the Harriet Johnson Nursery School, New York City, and on January 14 Mary Shattuck Fisher, chairman of the Child Study Department, Vassar College.

Each Saturday from 8:15 to 8:30 P. M., E.S.T., the National Broadcasting Company presents over its Blue Network, "Man and the World." The Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago and the American Museum of

Natural History in New York City are co-sponsors of this program, offering on alternate Saturdays dramatic accounts of people and events.

The Neely Bill

On November 20 the government's suit against the "Big Eight" motion picture producers was settled by a consent decree. The president of the Motion Picture Research Council, Ray Lyman Wilbur, says of this action:

Now that the signing of the decree has convinced us that only temporary and inadequate relief from the evils of block-booking can be hoped for under the Sherman Act, the way is cleared for prompt action by Congress on the Neely bill. This bill, which would permanently abolish compulsory block-booking and blind-selling, has been before Congress for more than five years. Twice it has been passed by the United States Senate. For many months it has been pigeonholed with the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce awaiting the outcome of the long drawn out negotiations for the consent decree. Congress' refusal to adjourn still affords time for its passage this session.

Emphasizing the importance of freedom in community choice of films as an indispensable factor in the preservation of democracy, Dr. Wilbur said:

Everywhere the motion picture is recognized today as one of the most powerful educational and propaganda media of modern times. Certainly the dictators have not overlooked it. The importance of securing local control of such media is re-emphasized by the tragic way in which the minds of children and youth in totalitarian countries are conditioned by government control of these media . . . The Neely bill strengthens and exemplifies the American philosophy. It should be passed without further delay.

Those in sympathy with the work of the Motion Picture Research Council on the Neely bill should write or wire their Congressmen.

Recent Meetings

Child Study Association of America: "Facing the Demands of Today" was the theme for a two-day institute held by the Child Study Association in New York City on November 15-16. At a special session preceding the institute, on November 14, Ernest G. Osborne of Teachers College, Columbia University, staff member of the Child Study Association, led an informal discussion on "National Defense: Its Challenge to Parent Education."

Topics for the four regular sessions were:

Discipline: The Challenge of Our Times.

Sex Education: Facts and Attitudes.

Progressive Education on Trial.

Education for Today and Tomorrow: Impact of the World Crisis.

National Association of Day Nurseries: The president, Dorothy Meigs Edlitz, in calling this conference asked that those attending "... consecrate three days for 'Children and Democracy,' although it will involve sacrifice of time, discipline of mind, and control of emotion." Said Mrs. Edlitz:

We love children—all children, not only our own. Do we respect them as individual growing personalities? Are we helping their families to maintain dignity and self-direction in a free society?

We believe day nurseries are essential social instruments deserving voluntary private support. Are we sure their programs are flexible enough to meet current community needs? Are we mobilizing the day nursery movement to keep step with kindred national resources?

If our answers are forthright and honest, we can withstand alarms from abroad. The children we serve will adapt themselves to a changing world.

The program of the conference, held in New York City on November 13 and 14, included inspirational addresses, a business session, and a morning and afternoon given to round table discussions of practical problems met by workers in day nurseries.

Women's Centennial Congress: The program of the meeting in New York City, January 25 and 26, included a review of "women's grievances" of 1840 and what had become of them, and a summary of the problems of 1940. Carrie Chapman Catt, chairman, presented a list of 100 women in important careers open to women in 1940. A panel discussion of today's problems was led by Eleanor Roosevelt.

The Association for Childhood Education was represented at the Congress by its president, Olga Adams.

National Council for Mothers and Babies: This Council is composed of sixty national agencies and organizations working together toward better care for mothers and babies. The Association for Childhood Education is one of these member organizations.

At its annual meeting in Washington, D. C., on November 15, the Council urged representatives of organizations to interest their local affiliated groups in securing information from state public health departments. The Council considers it the privilege and responsibility of such professional groups to be informed on health activities in their own communities.

Progressive Education Association

The national conference of the Progressive Education Association will be held February 19-



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TEACHING READING TO SLOW-LEARNING CHILDREN

By Samuel A. Kirk

"Dr. Kirk's book will fill a definite need for teachers who wish to help their slow-learning pupils. Here the teacher will find many suggestions which are practical and can be used in the classroom . . . Dr. Kirk's discussion has the common sense that comes from wide experience with mentally retarded children. It is a distinct pleasure to introduce to teachers this very helpful and practical book." — MARION MONROE, Specialist in Remedial Instruction and Director of the Educational Clinic, Pittsburgh Public Schools. Co-author of *Remedial Reading*, and author of *Reading Aptitude Tests*.

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22, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In announcing the various meetings under the theme, "Education and the Defense of Democracy," the Association says:

No problem is of greater importance to America than the defense of the democratic way of life. In this education plays a major role. This conference will bring together reports from schools that have developed programs of national significance.

Various fields and various levels of education will receive attention at group meetings and general sessions. On Thursday morning, February 20, Frances Mayfarth, editor of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, will preside over a group reporting on outstanding developments in the field of early childhood education.

A dinner meeting and a program of folk dances and songs will offer opportunities for social contacts and entertainment.

Atlantic City Meetings

American Association of School Administrators: The annual meeting of this department of the National Education Association will take place in Atlantic City, New Jersey, February 22-27, with headquarters at the Civic Auditorium. One of the programs in which readers of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION will be particularly interested is the general session on Wednesday morning, February 26, at which the 1941 yearbook, *Education for Family Life*, will be presented.

Many other groups plan their meetings to coincide with the A.A.S.A. conference. Some of those with which the Association for Childhood Education is concerned are listed below.

National Council of Childhood Education: The sessions of this Council, held each February, are planned by the presidents of two organizations, the Association for Childhood Education and the National Association for Nursery Education. This year a morning meeting, an informal luncheon, and an afternoon session will take place at Haddon Hall on Tuesday, February 25. Under the theme, "Public Recognition of the Importance of the Education and Welfare of Young Children in a Democracy," Lawrence Frank of the Macy Foundation, New York City, will talk on "Conserving Human Resources in the Field of Early Childhood." Group discussion will follow and all will reassemble for reports and a summary.

The afternoon session has as its theme "Members of a Community Plan How Best to Serve Young Children." A community coun-

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by Lillian E. Billington

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cil, composed of representatives of such groups as parents, teachers, public health agencies, the Community Chest, and social workers, will demonstrate how a community can *really* plan a program of service. Frank W. Hubbard of the National Education Association, Washington, D. C., will act as commentator.

The luncheon occurring between the two sessions will be served informally and will offer an opportunity to meet and talk with friends.

Fourth Annual Joint Conference on Teacher Education in the United States: Two subjects will be discussed at the meeting on Saturday afternoon, February 22, at the Ambassador Hotel. The first half of the session will be devoted to a report on the work of the seven teachers colleges participating in the Cooperative Study of Teacher Education. The second half will deal with evaluation of programs of teacher education at both pre-service and in-service levels. The Association for Childhood Education is one of the organizations cooperating in the conference.

National Council on Work-Study-Play Activities: "Common Elements in Divergent Philosophies" is the theme for a conference on February 24 at the Civic Auditorium. The philosophy of the elementary school will be presented from three viewpoints—the university, the education association, and the school principal—and a summary will follow. Dorothy Cadwallader of Trenton, New Jersey, will represent the Association for Childhood Education on this program.

From Geneva

The International Bureau of Education in Geneva, which last year established a Special Service of Intellectual Assistance to Prisoners of War, for the purpose of supplying prisoners of war with the necessary books to continue their study or research or for general cultural purposes, reports that there are at present more than two million such prisoners.

News from England

The Association for Childhood Education is affiliated with the New Education Fellowship, an international organization working to achieve world harmony through a proper understanding of childhood. Headquarters of the Fellowship are in London, England. From Clare Soper, secretary, comes the following message:

We are still alive but are working in three places—London, suburbs, and Somerset—so that if a bomb

gets our London house we shall not all vanish. In London we are near three large stations and heavy bombs are always dropping very close. We have windows out in every room and often no heating, but we keep open with the help of an oil stove.

Teachers are dispersed all over the country, and children too, but they are very eager for opportunities to get together and talk out all the things the war has stirred in them. We shall have a small gathering in Oxford soon after Christmas. What many of us want to discuss is, "What must we do to ourselves and the children so that war can never happen again?" The key lies somewhere in the human make-up and our lack of understanding of it.

Reading List

The National Council for Mothers and Babies has prepared in pocket-folder form "Reading on Better Care for Mothers and Babies: A Manifold Community Problem." This may be secured from the Council at 1710 Eye Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C. Send 10c with your request, to pay for preparation and mailing.

An Active Branch

The Central Council of Childhood Education is the Chicago Branch of the Association for Childhood Education. Its interests and activities range from those of nursery school through the intermediate grades and its present membership is made up of classroom teachers from nursery school to sixth grade, elementary school principals, supervisors, and college teachers of education. The purposes of the Central Council are:

To cooperate in solving problems arising in elementary education from the nursery school through the intermediate grades.

To familiarize members with the latest developments in education by means of exhibits, lectures, and discussion groups.

To promote acquaintance and interest within the profession.

A Job to Do

In a recent talk Harriet Elliott of the National Defense Advisory Commission said:

In this world crisis we all go about our daily tasks under something of a mental and emotional strain. There has never been a time in our history when it was more necessary to provide recreation in drama, music, community sings, games and play houses for all people. The relaxation which comes from proper recreation will relieve the nervous tension and mental strain generated by daily front page strains and radio broadcasts about our war torn world. This is a job to do—right on your own doorstep.

Miss Elliott has mailed copies of her address and other material to A. C. E. Branch presidents